595 and girls of suitable age. But only older men
701 were permitted to marry and form a household
with their wives and children.

The similarity between systems like the Masai and the Nayar system is that in those groups of the population organized for warfare, male sexuality was divorced from the upbringing of children, which among Nayars took place within the lineage and concerned only lineage members. Among the Masai this freeing of a man's sexual life from the responsibilities of child-rearing concerned only certain age-groups of men, while in Calicut and Cochin it applied to the total male population of one caste.

595 The extent to which Nayar kinship was in-
701 fluenced by their relation to the land and by the
566 military organization becomes clearer when we
184 compare the kinship system in Calicut and Cochin with that of Nayars in the northern kingdoms of Kolattunad, Kottayam and Kadattunad, north of the Kora River which formed the northern boundary of the Calicut kingdom at the height of the Zamorin's power.

Apart from the narrow coastal belt, the country in north Malabar was rocky and mountainous, and comprised much waste land and virgin forest. Perhaps because of this, the sparsely populated northern kingdom never achieved the degree of political centralization found in the central kingdom. Government was ostensibly by nadavaris owing a tenuous allegiance to their Rajas. In fact, however, in all these kingdoms chiefs perpetually rebelled against their Raja and shook off his power for long periods, while

595 701 526 184 within the chiefdom political control over and within villages was insufficient and feuds were common between adjacent villages and between individual lineages. The Nayars were not organized as a permanent militia of retainers, but merely fought occasionally on [80] behalf of a local chief. Apart from small subcastes of servants round the palaces, they formed an independent caste of cultivators owning their own land and lacking the overlordship of Nambudiri Brahmans and the service of agricultural serfs. Consistent with the absence of a permanent military organization, we find that in the North, Nayar men themselves managed the cultivation of their estates and sometimes actually worked the land, and that here residence was traditionally avunculocal, and polyandry unknown.

835 582 (3) Traditional Incest Prohibitions and Preferential Marriages

The traditional incest prohibitions were simple. In all castes of Malabar, prohibitions on sex-relations between kin coincide with prohibitions on marriage; this in any case would obviously be so among Nayars who did not distinguish the two and had no concept of adultery. Sex relations were strictly prohibited within the lineage: infringement of this rule was traditionally punishable by death, and during British rule with excommunication. Relations were also prohibited between a woman and two men of the same property-group, as between a man and two women of the same property-group. Sororal polygyny and fraternal polyandry, as well

conquests; that is, from 1342, the date of the first useful Arabic account 121
(Gibb, 1929) to the end of the eighteenth century. My sources 611
include English translations of the writings of Arab, Italian, Portuguese, [127]
Dutch, and French visitors to Kerala, works by English travelers,
government servants, historians, and anthropologists, and a few
historical works by Indian scholars who make use of indigenous Malayalam
and Sanskrit documents.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship are not evenly distributed 178
throughout the population. Some of the traditional institutions and 184
relationships persist, especially in villages most remote from the seats
of government and from modern market centers. Many other traditional
usages are remembered by older people. Because of this, my 124
own field work in three villages of Kerala—between November, 1947 114
and July, 1949—was able to provide me with the organizational framework
into which to fit the literary material, and supplied me with
many details on the traditional system not hitherto published.[2] Some 127
information was also gleaned from genealogies, manuscript histories 124
of particular lineages, and translations of Malayalam documents relating
to land tenure, property transactions, and religious rites.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship comprise a large subject, which 114
I have already briefly treated elsewhere (Gough, 1952*a*; see also Rao, 178
1957: 74–142). A full account will appear in a forthcoming book.

Ecology

Kerala, or the Malabar Coast, lies in the extreme southwest of India 131
beside the Arabian Sea. The coastline is some 360 miles long, the area 133
about 14,908 square miles. It is divided from the rest of South India
by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the center by
the Palghat Gap. From prehistoric to modern times, migrations took 167
place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal region, 133
but until the coming of modern transport the mountains prevented
continuous contacts between the people who became established
there and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its 177
position laid Kerala open to contacts by sea with many peoples, including
Jews and Arabs (from perhaps 800 B.C.), Egyptians and
Phoenicians (ca. fifth century B.C.), Romans (first century A.D.), Chi-

---

[2] My field work in three villages of Central and North Kerala was made possible [122]
by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and
of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology,
University of Cambridge. The preparation and writing of these chapters
have been carried out with the aid of two grants from the Social Science Research
Council, in 1954 and 1956.

dependence of India in 1947. Cochin and Travancore were amalgamated 175
in 1949 and, under popular pressure for the formation of linguistic 648
states, the whole area was reunited as the State of Kerala in 635
1956. This state elected a Communist government in 1957.

After 1498 there were certain changes in Kerala's economy. Trade [177]
and towns expanded, gunpowder was introduced and wars became
more devastating, and cash transactions became more prevalent [436]
among the aristocratic castes in villages (K. M. Panikkar, 1929: chap. [564]
XIV). But the basic form of the caste system and the pyramidal system
of kingdoms, subordinate chiefdoms, and villages persisted with [631]
little change until after the Mysorean conquest. The Calicut kingdom gradually declined after 1498, for the Portuguese allied themselves with the small kingdom of Cochin to the south, freed it from Calicut's overlordship, and used it as a base from which to expel the Arabs and subdue the Zamorins. Nevertheless, with fluctuating boundaries Calicut remained the most powerful kingdom until the 1730's.

Although its internal political boundaries have shifted continually,
Kerala is today still divisible into three major cultural areas. These 631
are distinguished by differences in the names and numbers of the 635
castes who occupy them, in dress, dietetic habits and ritual practices, 184 ●
and in the kinship systems of the several Hindu castes. The northern area, north of the Kora River, comprises the former kingdoms of Nileswaram, Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad. This was the area dominated by the Kolattiri kings in the fourteenth century and at various periods thereafter. In British times it became the northern part of Malabar District and the southern part of South Canara District; I shall call it North Kerala. The central area comprises the former kingdoms of Calicut, Walluvanad, Palghat, and Cochin. It was overrun by the Zamorins of Calicut at various times between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. In British times it formed South Malabar District and Cochin State; I shall refer to it as Central Kerala.
All the southern area (until recently, Travancore State) was at one
time or another subordinate to the kings of Travancore. The political [564]
systems—and consequently the internal caste divisions of the Nayars
and the forms of their kinship systems—differed in these three areas.
Much confusion has arisen in the past because of failure to distinguish
between the three regions. It has been assumed that the Nayars had [601]
one kinship system, whereas in fact they had three, with different
terminological structures. In this paper I describe Nayar kinship in [121]
two kingdoms of Central Kerala: Calicut and Cochin.

kinsmen and they avoided her except on ceremonial occasions. She 602
had a relationship of mutual courtesy with all of her husband's older
kinswomen and was given meticulous respect by her husband's junior
kinsfolk of both sexes. The *ammāyi* (mother's brother's wife) and the 604
chēdatti amma (elder brother's wife) play a role in Nayar jokes and 607
folk tales somewhat comparable to that of the stepmother in Europe. [522]
As was mentioned in connection with witchcraft, junior members of [538]
a taravād habitually resented these women's hold over their husbands
and represented them as grasping, unscrupulous, and intent on robbing
their husbands' juniors. This fear of the mother's brother's wife [184]
was however much more pronounced in North Malabar, where marriage
was monogamous or polygynous and residence avunculocal.

Co-wives and the wives of brothers, being in different houses, had 607
no institutionalized relationships and apparently very little contact. 595
The husbands of women of a property group also had only slight relationships.
There was no structure of authority between them because 602
they performed no activities together. The younger men accorded 592
some deference to the older, but all might sit together informally and
exchange news.

Virtually nothing is known of the relationships between co-husbands 595
except the testimony of several writers from the fifteenth to
eighteenth centuries that they "agreed very well" with each other.
They are said to have distributed the woman's time among them in a
convenient manner "according as they can fix a term among themselves"
(Hamilton, ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 172).

Among the Nayars of this area, households of the linked lineages 613
or enangar fulfilled the customary obligations and carried out the 592
ceremonial roles which were required of an individual's affinal or
matrilateral kin in the patrilineal castes of Kerala. It was enangar who *must* take part in life-crisis rites, make gifts at first menstruation and marriage ceremonies, and come to assist at deaths. Enangar were of course often currently affines of the households in which they officiated, for sambandham relationships took place most intensively between lineages of the local caste group. However, the enangar relationship did not derive from particular sambandham ties nor was it brought about by particular tāli rites. It was rather a hereditary relationship of "perpetual affinity" between lineages as groups, which persisted irrespective of the making and breaking of particular sexual ties. When a man who happened to have sambandham with some woman of a household acted there in his role of enangan, he did so as a representative of his lineage, irrespective of his interpersonal mar-

613 riage tie. Often, the particular persons who officiated as enangar did
592 not happen to be currently having marital relations with any member
of that house. This inter-group relationship of ceremonial obligation
fitted the fact that particular marital ties were too transient and slender to carry the normal obligations of affinity.

Prerequisites of the Kinship System of Commoners

595 It is not definitely known how the institutions of group marriage and
175 linked lineages arose among Central Kerala Nayars. In 1518 Barbosa,
writing of the Nayars of Calicut, stated of group marriage: "And it
is said that the kings made this law, in order that the Nayars should
not be covetous and should not abandon the king's service" (Dames,
1921: 124). Similarly João de Barros wrote at about the same period:
"They say that this (polyandry) is a very ancient law among them,
and that it springs from the wish of a certain king to relieve the men
of the burden of maintaining sons, and leave them ready for warlike
[671] service whensoever the king calls upon them" (*ibid.*: 241). Whether
or not group marriage was instituted by a particular royal edict, we
know that once it had begun it was enforceable by the laws of the
Central kingdoms. Thus, according to at least one authority, a chief
could compel a woman to receive as marital partners any of her en-
[613] angar who wished to visit her (K. Kannan Nair, 1908: 186). The rights
and duties of enangar in the administration of caste law were also
sanctioned by the chief and, ultimately, by the king.

595 Considerable literary evidence suggests that a form of group mar-
175 riage similar to that of Central Kerala existed among Nayars in at
least some of the chiefdoms of the kingdom of Travancore in Southern
●184 Kerala. K. M. Panikkar, it is true, has argued that Travancore Nayar
women were never polyandrous (1918: 270–271). Other Malabari
writers, however, responding to Panikkar's statement, have argued
convincingly that they were (Aiyappan, 1932*a*, 1932*b*, 1934; Iyer,
1932). K. P. Padmanabha Menon, in particular, supports the view that
traditionally Nayar women in both Central and Southern Kerala were
"held in common, every woman belonging to all the members of the
tribe, and resistance to any of them was severely punished." In support he quotes two early statements concerning the chiefdom of Venmani, with its capital of Kartigapally, in North Travancore. Thus the
Portuguese Archbishop Menezes in the mid-sixteenth century reported that "the king of Kartigapally enacted that in his kingdom any
Nair was at liberty to be free with any woman of the caste high or
low, and that he could kill a woman, with impunity, if she refuses

a favor"; and the Dutch Captain Nieuhoff observed in 1664 that "It 595
is commonly reported in these parts, that the kings of Venmani made 175
a law, by which a man was empowered to kill any woman that should
refuse him a kindness" (quoted in K. P. P. Menon, 1908: vii–viii). 184
These quotations are especially interesting because they suggest that, in Travancore as in Central Kerala, plural unions on the part of women were not merely permissible but, in theory at least, enforceable by law.

Similarly, Nayar informants of a village near Haripad in Central 595
Travancore told me that they understood that "long ago" Nayars of 175
Travancore had the institution of the visiting husband together with 184
polygyny and non-fraternal polyandry, like Central Kerala Nayars. The 178
same informants reported that during the nineteenth century, after
the Nayar armies were disbanded, residence became avunculocal [591]
among Nayars in this area of Travancore, non-fraternal polyandry died out, and for a few decades some Nayars practised fraternal polyandry, with a group of brothers assuming collective responsibility for one or more co-resident wives and their young children. Other writers also mention relatively modern cases of fraternal polyandry among Travancore Nayars (Iyer, 1932; Fawcett, 1901: 241). Later in the nineteenth century and during this century, however, Travancore matrilineal property groups began to disintegrate, and fraternal polyandry gave place to monogamy. The Central Travancore sequence of duolocality with group marriage, to avunculocality with fraternal polyandry, to partial neolocality with monogamy, is an interesting one in view of the fact that fraternal polyandry has, as far as I am aware, always been strictly forbidden among both duolocal Nayars of Central Kerala and avunculocal Nayars of North Kerala throughout the
historical period. I was able to spend only a fortnight in Travancore [114]
and could not pursue the comparison.

The marriage of a woman to more than one man concurrently is 595
not confined to the Nayars in southwest India. The double unilineal 171
Tiyyars and some other higher polluting castes of Central Kerala had fraternal polyandry, and both fraternal and non-fraternal polyandry were customary among the Toda tribe of the Nilgiri hills. The Coorgs to the east of North Kerala are also said to have had fraternal poly-
andry associated with patrilineal descent groups. The prevalence of [174]
various types of polyandry in southwest India generally suggests that *some* form of plural unions for women may have been very ancient among the Nayars, possibly predating their organization into kingdoms.

613

tween them also permitted the observance of the type of very formal 576
etiquette that existed in the Central kingdoms.

A peculiarity of strict avunculocal residence is that it separates 591
a woman from both her sons and her daughters after they are married. 593
The sons return to their ancestral estates and the daughters leave
with their husbands. The relationships of mother and children were
therefore less continuous than in Central Kerala. However, various 591
particular arrangements did often permit women to live with some 582
of their children for a great part of their lives. Cross-cousin marriage
was one of these. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was the most
popular, because by this means the daughter of a kāranavan and his
wife could be brought into their dwelling group as the wife of the
kāranavan's nephew. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage was also popular but less common.[1] It was less advantageous unless a shift from
the normal residential arrangements could be made. This sometimes
occurred when a kāranavan succeeded in arranging a marriage between his son and his sister's daughter. The son might then remain on
his father's ancestral estate for part of his life in patrilocal residence.
Any property which he developed there would pass to his wife's [428]
descendants as matrilineal heirs of the estate. In this way a woman [593]
might keep one of her sons living with her for a large part of her life.

Women were also commonly reunited with their sons at divorce or 591
widowhood, for they would then return to their taravāds to live. 593
Whatever the circumstances of residence, moreover, a man should
place his duties to mother and sisters above those to wife and children.
The ideals of devotion and reverence to matrilineal kinswomen were
the same as in Central Kerala. Brother and sister were drawn apart
by the normal rules of residence but, like mother and son, came together if the sister were divorced or widowed and returned to her
taravād. A woman also returned to her taravād for several months at [844]
the time of childbirth, for every child had to be born in its own
Taravād.

---

[1] In the Kottayam village already cited, 12 per cent of Nambiar commoner
women who had been married had at some time married their father's own or
classificatory sister's son; 8 per cent had married their own or classificatory maternal
uncle's son. Cross-cousin marriage is, as everywhere in Kerala, more common
among the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and chiefs. Of the women of
six village headmen's lineages over a period of five generations, 17 per cent had
married their father's own or classificatory sister's son, and 13 per cent their own
or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is thus more [593]
usual in North than in Central Kerala. One reason for this is that fathers in North
Kerala more commonly educate and endow their sons. By this means a father ac- [584]
quires the right to a voice in arranging his son's marriage, often to the father's [184]
niece.

585
and her children were not illegitimate unless she had relations with 684
a man of low caste. 848

A woman normally lived with her husband in his ancestral home 593
or in a separate house on his ancestral land. He then owed her physical
protection and at least a part of her food and clothing, in return for [591]
limited domestic services. Occasionally a man might choose to visit
his wife in her ancestral home if she lived nearby. In this case he
might work on her ancestral land or bring periodic provisions of
grain and clothing to her and her children. He would eat sometimes [264]
in his ancestral house and sometimes in the house of his wife. In all [844]
marriages a husband was obliged to pay the full expenses of delivery [613]
when his wife bore a child in her ancestral home and, additionally,
to supply grain and other food to her throughout the six months which [431]
she spent in her taravād at this time.

A woman owed respect and obedience to her husband. He had the
right to scold or even to beat her if she disregarded his wishes.
Polygyny was permitted and was fairly common among village head- [595]
men, chiefs, and royalty. The polygynous husband usually provided
separate houses for his wives on his ancestral estate.

Theoretically, either party might divorce the other at will, but in 586
fact it was usually the husband who initiated a divorce. We do not
know how common divorce was in the traditional period. At present
it is rare in wealthy landowning lineages, although it probably takes
place rather more frequently than among aristocratic Mappillas of
North Kerala. It is more usual among the poorer Nambiar commoners,
although probably less frequent than among the poorer Tiyyars of
this area.

Widows might remarry freely by traditional law. Today it is some- 587
what rare for a widow to remarry if she has children under the age
of three or four; we do not know whether this was the case tradi-
tionally. A widow who does remarry almost invariably leaves her [858]
children by the first marriage behind in her taravād, in the care of
her mother or some other older natal kinswomen. Such children may
visit their mother in their stepfather's house but they have no cus-
tomary rights of maintenance there, and it is considered that their
own taravād is the correct place for them to live.

Thus in North Kerala, by contrast with Central Kerala, differences 593
of paternity may create structural divisions among the children born 184
of one mother. All are of the same taravād and share the same funda- 858
mental birth-status rights, but if their fathers were different they [613]

593 will have had different life experiences. One set of siblings may receive
● 184 property from their father in which their maternal half-siblings
858 have no legal rights. Each set of full siblings will have important
relationships with its own paternal kin. In many respects, therefore,
[613] children of the same mother by different fathers have a relationship
more comparable to that of the children of two sisters than to that
which obtains between full siblings. However, the ties between
maternal half-siblings are much stronger than those between paternal
half-siblings, who have only a slight relationship. At best, it may be
comparable to that between paternal parallel cousins; at worst it may
be one of open hostility.

768 A woman's claims on her husband's taravād ceased absolutely with
613 his death. As in Central Kerala, a widow was ceremonially conducted
out of her husband's house immediately after the death and could
[764] not enter it thereafter. Husband and wife did not observe death pollution
[783] and did not take part in each other's funeral rites.

Hypergamous marriages in aristocratic lineages bore some resemblance
591 to those in Central Kerala, although they were never
613 polyandrous. Brahman husbands of royal or chiefly women lived
184 matrilocally at the expense of the palace as in Central Kerala. Royal
and chiefly men, however, brought their lower-ranking wives to live
on their estates in avunculocal residence. The wife and her children
occupied a separate house or else a wing of the palace with separate
[783] cooking arrangements. Husband and wife observed rules of ritual
pollution as in hypergamous marriages in the Central kingdoms.

855

THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

613 The kāranavan held ultimate legal control over all his juniors, but
their fathers had limited customary rights in and obligations to them.
593 A man was expected to care for his children in his home until they
reached puberty or married. Although their own taravād had a legal
obligation to maintain them in food and clothing, the father's taravād
[867] customarily supplied their day-to-day needs as a matter of pride. The
[868] father was expected to train his small children in manners and morals,
to see that they were taught to write, and to give his sons instruction
in cultivation. In return he could ask his children to do small tasks,
593 could exercise domestic discipline while they stayed with him, and
613 could expect kindness and occasional help from them when he was
[584] old. His consent had to be sought for his children's marriages and he
often arranged the marriage of his daughter, although he could not
[431] override her kāranavan's wishes. Over and above their customary

605 oblivious of these affairs. If the husband found out he might keep
836 quiet or might divorce his wife, but he would not be likely to take
837 vengeance.

AFFINES

602 The etiquette of behavior between affines was practically identical
576 in North and Central Kerala, but in the North they had recognized
184 obligations.

During her marriage a woman became partly integrated into her
602 husband's property group. Her husband could request her to cook and
592 do limited domestic work for any of his matrilineal kin. She would
613 do so regularly if she lived in an avunculocal extended family. In such households there was a certain authority structure between the
[593] wives of matrilineally related men, based on the relative age of the husbands. The oldest woman directed the group and the younger ones should obey her. Matters went most smoothly when a woman was the mother of her husband's niece-in-law. Older women in avunculocal households did not, however, have the unequivocal authority over junior wives which is found in the patrilocal extended families of the higher patrilineal castes of India. They would never beat a girl and usually courted her affection. If the young wife was dissatisfied she might urge her husband to move to a separate house, go home for long periods, or even seek a divorce.

In strict avunculocal residence the kāranavan's wife had domestic authority, keeping the keys of storerooms and directing the younger wives. However, if any woman born into the taravād returned to live in it she could demand the internal management of the home as
[598] a right. The relations between a woman and her husband's sisters and nieces were thus often strained. Soon after such a natal kinswoman
[607] returned to her home in this way, the kāranavan would try to move his
[604] wife into a separate building to avoid feminine disputes. However, a younger wife often lived for several years in the same house with her husband's widowed mother and was expected to obey her with good grace.

602 A woman and her husband's older matrilineal kinsmen avoided one
613 another—except on ceremonial occasions—because of incest prohibitions. She was accorded meticulous respect by her husband's younger matrilineal kin, who usually feared and resented her influence over her husband. Gruesome proverbs told of the tortures which men and women would like to inflict on the wives of their elder brothers and
[604] uncles, and it was said that "If the uncle's wife and nephews sit down peaceably together, *nux vomica* and bitter gourds will turn to honey."

The wives of her elder matrilineal kinsmen figured prominently in the life-crisis rites of a girl, performing the ritual acts done by enangar women in Central Kerala. 602 613 796

Because of residence patterns men had less contact than did women with the property groups of their spouses. They must be invited to all ceremonies and had ritual duties in those connected with their own children. As sambandhakkar of a property group, the husbands of its female members were usually consulted formally by its kāranavan before he undertook important matters such as building houses or dividing property. He was not, however, obliged to follow their advice. 613 602

Kinship Terms

A. MATRILINEAL KIN 601

The pattern of terms was the same as in Central Kerala. Lexically, the only difference was that MoMo and her sisters (A1) were called *acchamma* (literally, "father's mother"), a term extended to them from FaMo. This usage probably resulted from the fact that a child normally recognized FaMo earlier than MoMo and had more contact with her. 184

B. AFFINES AND NON-MATRILINEAL COGNATES

In North Kerala, as might be expected, there were customary kinship terms for the patrilateral kin. The terms for affines and non-matrilineal cognates were as follows.

(1) *Bhārya*. M. speaking. Wi. Reference only.

(2) *Bartāvu*. F. speaking. Hu. Reference only.

(3) *Sambandhakkar*. M. and F. speaking. Collective. Husbands of women of ego's lineage, primarily of ego's property group. Reference only.

(4) *Acchappan* ("Father's father"). M. and F. speaking. FaFa and FaFaBr. FaFaSiHu, FaMoBr, FaMoSiHu. MoFa and MoFaBr. MoFaSiHu, MoMoSiHu.

(5) *Acchamma* ("Father's mother"). FaMo and FaMoSi. FaFaBrWi, FaFaSi and FaMoBrWi. MoFaSi, MoMo, MoMoSi, MoFaBrWi.

(6) *Amma* ("Mother"). M. and F. speaking. Extended from Mo and MoSi to FaSi and FaBrWi. FaSi is called *valiya* ("big") mother or *elaya* ("younger") mother according to her age in relation to the father. FaBrWi is so designated according to FaBr's age in relation to Fa.

(7) *Acchan*. M. and F. speaking. Fa, mother's current husband,

601 FaBr, FaSiHu, MoSiHu. The last three are designated "older" or "younger" in the same manner as above.

● 184 (8) *Ammāyi*. M. and F. speaking. Wi of any male of first or second ascending generations within ego's lineage, especially within his property group.

(9) *Aliyan*. M. speaking. Reciprocal between a man and Wi's lineage kinsmen of her generation, primarily within her property group. Reference only.

(10) *Jyēshtatti amma*. M. and F. speaking. Wi of older male of ego's generation within his lineage, primarily within his property group.

(11) *Machunian*. M. and F. speaking. Male cross cousin, i.e., male of ego's father's lineage in ego's generation, or So of ego's own, or classificatory MoBr within his lineage. Extended to male cross cousins of either parent.

(12) *Machunichi*. M. and F. speaking. The female equivalent of B11.

(13) *Makan*. M. speaking. WiSo. Reference only.

(14) *Makal*. M. speaking. WiDa. Reference only.

(15) *Pērakutti*. M. and F. speaking. Reciprocal of B4 and B5. Used primarily of own grandchild through either So or Da. Reference only.

[602] A man or woman used the same terms to address the spouse's natal kin as the own natal kin except in case of an avoidance relationship.

[605] An individual *addressed* all cross-cousins in the same manner as siblings, reserving terms B11 and B12 for reference. He addressed and referred to paternal parallel cousins as siblings.

[564] Kinship terms were used in relationships with affines or cognates of higher or lower matrilineal caste but not in relationships with Nambudiri Brahman relatives.

601
602 *Comment:* Males and females of the second ascending generation were equated with grandparents, except for the maternal great-uncle and his wife. This fits the fact that relationships with the maternal great-uncle and his wife were distant and authoritative while those with other kin of this generation were non-authoritative and informal. Similarly, in the first ascending generation the mother's brother and his wife are singled out as distant and authoritative figures. All others of this generation are classed with the parents as non-authoritative figures.

The existence of Iroquois cousin terms for reference fits the special joking relationship and preferential marriage between cross cousins as contrasted with the prohibition of marriage between parallel cousins of both sides.

[pp. 405-745 not processed]

[P. 446]

CULTS OF THE DEAD AMONG THE NĀYARS

By E. Kathleen Gough

121 IN this paper I shall attempt both a sociological and a psychological analysis of
Nāyar cults of the dead. That is to say, I shall try to relate the role-structure
and social functions of the cults to those of legal and economic institutions, and
to relate the emotional content of the cults to that of certain relationships among the
living.

613 The Nāyars[1] are a high, matrilineal caste of landholders and salaried workers.
564 Some four to seven matrilineal lineages of commoner Nāyars traditionally occupied
101 the high caste area of a village. They served a Nāyar or Nambūdiri Brahman village
headman, and had authority over tenants, artisans, and serfs of lower caste. The
lineage was exogamous, had a depth of about ten to fifteen generations and was concerned in village government. But the more significant economic unit was a lineage
segment (*taravād*), whose members jointly owned property including an ancestral
house. The eldest man of this group was its legal guardian (*kāranavan*).

635 Before British rule began in 1792, the Malabar Coast comprised a number of
175 kingdoms. I am concerned with Nāyars of villages in the former Cochin kingdom,
in the center of the coast, and with those of villages in the former Kottayam kingdom
121 in the north.

In Cochin, the country was relatively flat, fertile, and densely populated. The
105 Nāyars were the professional military caste. For a part of each year they tended to be
184 absent from the village in military training or war. Women remained on their ancestral
[133] estates under the legal guardianship of the *kāranavan* and were maintained by the
[595] work of tenants and serfs. Probably largely as a result of the relatively mobile military
occupation of the men, plural marital unions were customary. A woman might have
six or eight husbands of her own or a higher subcaste, and a man, any number of
[591] Nāyar wives of his own or a lower subcaste. Residence was duolocal: spouses lived
separately in their natal homes and a husband visited his wife in her home at night.
[751] Exact physiological paternity was, clearly, often unknown, and in any case a man had
[594] no rights in nor obligations to his children. Among Nāyars of this area, therefore,
contrary to Murdock's generalization,[2] the elementary family was not institutionalized
[114] as a legal, economic or residential unit.

[133] In Kottayam, the terrain was mountainous and jungly, the area more sparsely
populated, and the kingdom less centralized. The Nāyars were cultivating landowners
[591] and only occasional warriors. The hilly and jungly terrain and the sparsity of population
made duolocal residence impracticable. In most cases a man took his wife to live in
his ancestral household in avunculocal residence, and children were brought up until
[595] adolescence in the houses of their fathers. There was some polygyny, but polyandry
was forbidden. Fathers had morally though not legally recognized rights in and

obligations to their children and a strong affective bond with them. The *Karanavān* 105
of their lineage segment was however the authority in important matters. 184

Both in Kottayam and in Cochin, Nāyar women were occasionally married to 105
men of the highest, patrilineal caste of Nambūdiri Brahmans. Children of such unions 564
were Nāyars, and rules of ritual pollution maintained distance between them and their
higher caste fathers. The Nambūdiri father might not eat with his wife and children, 582
and might not touch them during the daytime while in a state of ritual purity. Only [184]
the eldest son of a Nambūdiri house might marry a Nambūdiri wife and beget children
for his own family.

British rule brought about the collapse of the Nāyar armies early in the nineteenth 105
century. Probably as a result of this change, plural marriages gradually died out in 177
Cochin. The lineage system persisted with little change until the turn of the century, 178
but in both areas the employment of men in professional and wage work led to the [613]
development of privately owned property in addition to property owned jointly by
the matrilineal group. The Malabar Marriage Act of 1896 permitted men to register [656]
their marriages and gave the children of such marriages rights in half the personal [421]
property of the father after his death. During this century, the greatly increased [964]
employment of men in salaried work, and the development of cash-crop farming,
have brought about a partial disintegration of the matrilineage, and have tended
toward the emergence of the elementary family as an economic and legal unit. Under 105
the pressure of these changes, laws[3] were passed in 1933 and 1937 which required all 177
men to register their marriages, gave rights of maintenance to their wives and children,
and provided that the whole of a man's personal property be inherited by his wife 178
and children. In addition, the laws permitted, though they did not require, equal 421
division of the matrilineal estate on a per caput basis[4] between all members. Although [656]
some traditional households remain, it has now become fairly customary for a woman
and her immature children jointly to separate their shares of property from those of
the rest of their matrilineal group, and to set up a new establishment with the woman's
husband. He, in turn, may have abstracted his single share of property from that of
his own matrilineal group. Sometimes, the husband himself provides a new house
for his elementary family from his own share of property and his private earnings.
Sometimes the new house is provided from the property of the wife and children,
who receive their husband and father into it as a resident and wage earner. Sometimes
husband and wife pool their property and set up a joint establishment.

Given the modern heterogeneity of legal, economic, and residential arrangements, 769
and given also variations in education, interests, and life experience, it is not surprising 178
that cults of the dead reveal differential rates of change. I shall be chiefly concerned
with the traditional cults, although these persist without change in only a few of the [121]
more traditionally patterned households—actually, in fifteen percent of Nāyar
households in one Cochin village, and in thirteen percent in one village in Kottayam.

The Nāyars participate in three distinguishable categories of cults of the dead. 769
The first comprises a collective cult, by the matrilineal property group, of the ghosts
of matrilineal forebears, which I call lineage ghosts. This cult is non-Sanskritic. The 121
second category comprises various kinds of offerings by individuals to the spirits of 613
dead kinsfolk at funerals or on the anniversaries of deaths. These cults are Sanskritic
in origin. The third category comprises various cults of the ghosts of persons who
were not members of the Nāyar's own lineage; I call these alien ghosts. These cults,

Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the taravad might become drunk with toddy and arrack. In this condition, one or more young men might undergo possession by one of the ghosts. He performed a frenzied dance and called out to the assembled members with the voice of the ghost, declaring its will and thanking or threatening the *taravād* on its behalf. I heard of only one *taravād* where this custom persisted. Shamanistic possession by the goddess Bhagavatī or by the god Aiyappan is, however, still prevalent among rural Nāyars, and such religious possession is still more common among the lower castes. 776 769 613 773 787 [776] [784]

In some *taravāds*, propitiation of lineage ghosts accompanies that of various deities associated with the *taravād*. Chief of these is the lineage's patron goddess (*dharma devī*). The goddess, though known by different names in different *taravāds*, is always thought of as a species of the generic goddess Bhagavadi or Bhādrakāli, the chief deity of the Nāyars. Each group of Nāyar *taravāds* in a village usually possesses in common a temple dedicated to Bhādrakāli, but each *taravād* has, in addition, its own goddess. Cults of the village goddess are more important in Cochin, and of the *taravād* goddess, in Kottayam. The village goddess is believed capable of withholding or inflicting on the population wholesale misfortunes of a kind which strike all men alike—smallpox, cholera, flood, drought, cyclone, cattle epidemic, or defeat in an intervillage feud. Such inflictions result from failure to propitiate the goddess or failure to uphold the moral laws of caste. The *taravād* goddess concerns herself with its members' private morality and inflicts such individual misfortunes as fever, barrenness in women or cattle, or grave financial loss. 769 776 782 613 [346] [184] [753]

In aristocratic *taravāds*, the goddess and the lineage ghosts may nowadays be housed together in an ancient gynasium (*kalari*) near the ancestral house—a building formerly devoted to the military training of the *taravād's* youth. The ghosts may then be propitiated with cooked food on the same day on which a cock is sacrificed to the patron goddess. In such rites, propitiation of both spirits and goddess are associated with the *taravād's* former martial glory. In the rites there usually figure one or more ancestral swords which the male forebears used during their lives. These swords are the property of the goddess and are propitiated by the *kāranvan* as representatives of the deity. [346]

Lineage ghosts have some concern with the *taravād's* internal morality. If its members fail in hospitality to guests, squander their income, or neglect their property, the ghosts may inflict misfortunes on one or more members of the group. However, failure to propitiate the ghosts correctly is the offence most likely to provoke retribution. Conversely, if offerings are made correctly to the ghosts, they will help to preserve the *taravād* from misfortune. 769 626 782 613

The ghosts vary in their severity and in the wrongs which they punish. A *kāranavan* who amassed much property is most likely to resent extravagance on the part of his successors. Forebears who died prematurely are more punitive than those who died peacefully in old age. All ghosts, however, are somewhat capricious: a small offense may provoke stern retribution, and misdemeanors on the part of one adult may result in the sickness of another or of a child of the property group. In particular, a forebear who was injured or insulted by his juniors during life or after his death may wreak vengeance on the *taravād* even down to the seventh or eighth generation. One instance from a village headman's lineage in Kottayam will illustrate such retribution. In 1798, the property group was dying out for lack of women, and the *kāranavan* adopted a woman and her children from a related segment of his lineage. After the [597] [429] between males, for a woman does not offer the threat of a rival to her male superior. 604 Difference of sex, however, makes this relationship even more formal than that 562 between men. Women do not appear frequently in the presence of their mothers' brothers. They occupy separate wings of the house, and intercourse between the sexes is severely restricted. Toward older brothers a woman's relationship is restricted 593 almost to the point of avoidance. If she commits a misdemeanor, especially a sexual 562 one, a woman immediately fears men senior to her in the *taravād*. Formerly, she 684 might be executed by her brothers if she had sexual relations with a lower caste man. In an orthodox household today, a girl who becomes pregnant by a low caste man will be either expelled from the house by her male seniors or, at best, will be thrashed and will receive much subsequent harsh treatment.

It may be wondered why, since women are excluded from legal authority and from 562 participation in the cult, ancestresses are believed capable of harming *taravād* members. 613 The explanation of this, too, seems to lie in the content of relationships with the 593 mother and other natal kinswomen. Women have no legal authority over their juniors. 769 Indeed, the mother of a *kāranavan* is herself under his jurisdiction. Women do, however, exercise great moral authority over their children throughout their lives. In 184 Cochin with duolocal residence, the care of children under about the age of five is 562 almost entirely in the hands of women in a traditional *taravād*. Their fathers have no 613 rights over them, the *kāranavan* is too remote a figure to concern himself with details of child training, and junior men of the *taravād* are often absent from home. A mother 593 commonly treats her small children with indulgence, but is necessarily also the source 591 of many frustrations, while the maternal grandmother and women of her generation are strict disciplinarians.

In Kottayam, where residence was traditionally avunculocal, children were frequently brought up in the *taravād* of the father. In such households today, the child has an intimate, affectionate relationship with his father who undertakes a part of his personal care. When the father's *kāranavan* is also the mother's father (as fairly often occurs with cross-cousin marriage), he and his wife treat the child with indulgence. Otherwise, they tend to have only a slight relationship with him and may even resent his claim to temporary hospitality in their house. The mother is, in these [604] circumstances, again the child's chief mentor and disciplinarian, and he learns very early that his mother's brothers, though living elsewhere, are the real authorities whom he must respect and to whom he will return at adolescence, as their heir. In 613 both areas the reverence acquired for the mother is perpetuated throughout life. 593 Her wishes and those of his elder sister take precedence over those of a man's wife, to whom he has a very subsidiary attachment. The relationship with the mother is 184 clearly characterized by great depth of emotion and by greater tenderness than that toward male seniors. Even so, it appears that in this relationship too, the emotion is usually consciously ambivalent. I illustrate this statement briefly with reference to the 159 relationship between only one man and his mother, but it is characteristic of many. 593 This Cochin Nāyar, aged thirty-five, visited us stealthily in the evenings and kept his visits from his mother, telling her he had business in the town. He was afraid she would become jealous, and angry with him for eating Christian food. She watched over him, upbraiding him when he spent much time in the house of his wife and children. He took care to be prompt for meals, and although he found her food inadequate he would not complain in case he appeared to slight her cookery. He had had a high

159 school education and disbelieved in much traditional Nāyar ritual. Yet he once
593 arranged for the performance of a sacrifice to a minor malevolent deity, Kuttichāttan,
because his mother thought that this demon had killed their calf. On this occasion
he complained that he found her control irksome, and wished he had younger brothers
who would care for her and allow him to travel more. "I love *and* fear her," he said,
"Sometimes I am angry with her." "But you don't say anything?" "Ah, no, nothing!"
593 Far more than in most of the patrilineal castes of South India, therefore, a man's
769 mother remains the supreme, if somewhat resented, moral authority. There is no
wonder that after death a woman should be believed capable of punishing her children
and grandchildren if they displease her.

769 Even so, ancestresses play only a minor part in the cult of forebears, subordinate,
613 as in life, to the spirits of *kāranavans*. For the cult of lineage ghosts too closely resembles
everyday adult relationships in the *taravād* for women to be accorded a
776 paramount place within it. In religion, the supreme moral authority of the mother
593 finds its expression rather in the cult of the goddess Bhagavadi. Bhagavadi is lifted above
the sphere of kinship relationships, yet as patron of the *taravād* and the village she is
stated to be the supernatural counterpart of the mother. Her attributes are more awesome
and archaic than are those of ancestresses, and it seems probable that in her are
portrayed very early infantile fantasies of the mother, corresponding to those of the
period when she was the only significant object in the child's world. She inspires
devotion and tenderness but, in her aspect as Bhādrakāli, she is also a horrendous
demon, having snakes for hair, talons for fingernails, fangs for teeth, brandishing
weapons in her arms, and with her mouth dripping blood. Her oral aggression is
emphasized, for she is a devourer of male demons who dare to oppose her power.
Bhagavadi is the great deity of both men and women among Nāyars, but she is more
concerned with men than with women. She is the goddess of war, she possesses men
more frequently than women, and it is men who devote themselves intensively to
769 her cult. Ancestresses, on the other hand, seem to be somewhat more likely to attack
593 women than men. The different relationships of men and of women to their mothers
may be relevant in this connection. For a woman, the relationship with the mother
is less awesome, less inspiring, more intimate and realistic but also more irksome and
[613] rivalrous than for a man. A woman replaces her mother in the *taravād*, and as she
grows up, rivalry, including sexual rivalry, is often apparent between them. Women
retain the right to administer corporal punishment to their daughters until adolescence
or marriage, whereas men earlier pass under the discipline of their mothers'
brothers and appear to retain a more childlike image of the mother. Nuances in the
cult of the ancestors and the great deities appear to reflect this differential relationship
of men and women to the senior generation.

● 184 In Kottayam, with avunculocal residence, fathers traditionally had a protective
593 and intimate relationship with their children. It might be expected that the father's
ghost would figure in some way in the cult of ghosts. This is not the case. The cults
769 are practically identical in Kottayam and Cochin, and although a woman and her
613 immature children in Kottayam lived in the house of the woman's husband, the
husband's lineage ghosts were not believed capable of affecting their welfare. This is
apparently because, both in Kottayam and Cochin, the ancestor cult mirrors the
legal structure and collective responsibility of the *taravād*, which are identical in
the two areas. The father's ghost has no place among the lineage ghosts because,

Tamil AW16
Tanjore Brahma
K

184

however intimately related to his children he may have been, he belongs to a different 593
economic and legal corporation. In death as in life, he has no publicly supported 769
authority over his children. Children do have a personalized relationship with their 613
father's spirit in Kottayam, however, which is discussed below.

K
The emotional content of the relationships with lineage ghosts among the Nāyars 769
does not depend upon the fact that they follow matrilineal descent, although of
course the role-structure of the cult is determined by this fact. The Īravas[13] of this 613
area, who are tenant cultivators of lower rank than the Nāyars, have small patrilineal 171
lineages and patrilocal extended families, cross-cut, traditionally, by dispersed exogamous 174
matrilineal clans. The Īrava patrilineage is called a *taravād* and is headed by 184
its senior male member as *kāranavan*. The Īravas have a cult of dead patrilineal *kāranavans*
almost identical in emotional and belief content with that of Nāyars. So also do
the Coorgs, a patrilineal caste of the small province east of Kottayam, well described
by Srinivas.[14] The common form of the cult and the similarity of detail in this general
area must undoubtedly be attributed to diffusion or to a common historical origin.
Nevertheless, the question then arises of why this cult was not diffused to all castes of
the southwest coast, notably to the Brahmans. Conversely, we may ask why the
Brahmanical cult of ancestors, which is quite different in form and content, did not
entirely replace the ancestral cults of the non-Brahman castes centuries ago—for
these castes have been exposed to Brahmanical culture probably for two thousand K
years and have in fact adopted many elements of that culture. Moreover, cults of 769
punitive ancestors similar to the Nāyar cult are very widespread in the world. It 171
seems certain that whatever their historical origin, the reasons for the perpetuation
of these cults must be sought in the role-structure of the kinship system and the 602
emotional content of relationships with major figures of the senior generation within 174
it. I would suggest that cults of predominantly punitive ancestors are likely to be 561
accompanied by kinship relationships in which the senior generation retains control 578
over the junior until late in life, but in which major figures of the senior generation
are not highly idealized. It seems probable that the chief sanction against value-violating
behavior will be fear of some tangible form of punishment, rather than
fear over loss of love, and that although open expression of aggression toward disciplinary
figures is controlled, the aggressive component in the ambivalent relationship K
to seniors will be strong and not deeply repressed. Among Nāyars and Īravas of my 769
acquaintance, at all events, a man may even be conscious of his ambivalence toward 602
seniors, and to the extent that he is not able fully to accept his own aggressive feelings 154
he seems to project these in the belief that his superiors are even more punitive than
they may really be. A portion of this projected aggression his culture encourages him 578
to displace on the figures of lineage ghosts, who can inflict even more serious punishments 561
than can living superiors. As is frequently the case in our own society, the K
mechanism of projection seems to be closely allied with that of introjection, which [753]
appears in the belief that sickness and mental derangement are caused by the entry
of a hostile ghost into the body of the patient. T

The nature of traditional Nāyar relationships to their lineage ghosts may be clarified 769
by contrasting them with those of Brahmans. I choose for this purpose the Tamil 613
Brahmans of Tanjore,[15] with whom I am best acquainted. This caste of landowners
and ritual specialists has patrilocal extended families and patrilineal lineages. Headship 564
of the extended family does not, as among Īravas and Coorgs, pass down the line of 596

Nambūdiri Brahmans

769 crop and cattle blight. These he continued to explain in terms of a childlike picture
731 of powerful supernatural elders.

It must also be noticed that although there are slight differences in the relation-
769 ships of men and women to lineage ghosts, the ghosts are, in general, far more alike
783 than are matrilineal elders. A man's relation with his mother is very different from
154 that with his mother's brother, and his relations with different mother's brothers are
[562] by no means uniform. Yet the ghosts are collectively regarded as both protective and
dangerously punitive. It seems probable, therefore, that a Nāyar reprojects his own supergo onto the standardized, institutionalized image of lineage ghosts which his culture provides him. For the superego, like the ghosts, is a composite of the prohibitions imposed by a number of elders. The superego is also formed in part from the individual's own aggression, which he defends against by projecting it upon the generalized parental image which he has internalized. If this view is correct, reprojection of the harsh superego onto ghosts in times of misfortune must serve to reduce guilt. For the offences which the ghosts ostensibly punish with sickness are often inadvertent or trivial ones, such as failure in the correct performance of rites. The astrologer's diagnosis may thus permit him to focus his generalized guilt (concerning deeper, un-
conscious aggressive impulses) upon a specific, minor lapse of duty on the part of
[782] himself or one of his kinsmen. He is then able to take practical steps to alleviate his
guilt through propitiation of the supernatural agents. The Brahman's offerings on behalf of his ancestors also seem to serve as an alleviation of guilt, but in a different manner. For instead of reprojecting his harsh superego onto ancestral figures, the Brahman apparently projects it wholly outside the area of human relations onto a vindictive god of death, whose hell he believes endangers both his own and his parents' souls. He appears to alleviate his guilt through rites designed to preserve them and himself from this fate.

769 If it is true that the Nāyar reprojects his own superego upon the lineage ghosts,
this would explain why the ghosts are so much more punitive than are living elders.
182 They are thus fitting agents for the infliction of natural misfortunes, which in fact
626 fall more heavily and capriciously than do the punishments of living elders. The
fact that all members of the *taravād* are enabled to focus projected aggression and guilt feelings upon the ghosts probably enhances the internal solidarity of the *taravād*, by lifting a portion of these troublesome feelings from inside to outside the group. The cult thus brings together in rites of propitiation these very kinsmen who (in one aspect of their relationship) hate each other, and forges renewed bonds of mutual devotion in the appeasement of beings whom all of them fear.

FUNERALS AND ANNIVERSARIES: THE SANSKRITIC CULTS

76 Although they retained the non-Sanskritic cults of ghosts, the Nāyars long ago
● 184 adopted many Brahmanical usages in connection with funerals and with rites on the
564 anniversary of a death. Such usages include cremation rather than burial of the dead,
and offerings of rice balls (*bali*), water, and other oblations in the days of pollution following a death. As among Nambūdiri Brahmans, the chief heir, at the end of the period of pollution, enters a period of ascetic mourning (*dīkṣā*) for one year in Cochin and for forty-one days in Kottayam. At the end of this time he may dispose of the bones and ashes in a sacred river. He makes *bali* offerings to the spirit on each day of his mourning, and at its close, performs final offerings which unite the deceased with

4: Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar
Nambūdiri Brahmans

76 184 564

his forebears. Thereafter he offers rice balls and other oblations in a *śrāddham* ceremony on each anniversary of the death.

Many of these customs are of long standing among the Nāyars. Barbosa[18] reported in 1518 that Nāyar royalty observed *dīkṣā* for the dead in the same manner as Nambūdiris. Sheikh Zein-ud-Deen[19] recorded the custom for commoner Nāyars in 1579. Linschoten[20] reported in 1598 that Nāyars normally cremated their dead. Today, Nāyar death and anniversary rites are almost identical in form with those of Nambūdiris. During the period of death pollution they employ a lower matrilineal caste to instruct them in the rites. (In Cochin, Chīdigans fulfill this function; in South Malabar, Attikūrssis; and in North Malabar, Mārārs.) The same caste assists Nambūdiri Brahmans to prepare the ritual materials for their funerals, and has clearly transmitted the Brahmanical rites to the Nāyars. Similarly, at the end of the death pollution on the sixteenth day, during the *dīkṣā* period, and on anniversary days, Nāyars are instructed in their oblations by a priest of a degraded subcaste of Brahmans. (This subcaste is the Elayads in Cochin and South Malabar and the Nambidis in North Malabar.) A few peculiarly non-Brahmanical rites do, however, survive. In Kottayam, poorer Nāyars among commoners customarily bury their dead.[21] In both areas those who burn the dead bury the bones and ashes in a pot under a jack-fruit tree outside the ancestral house near the ancestor shrine. Some leave the bones there permanently and consider that the ghost remains near the bones and the ancestral house. Others dig up the bones after the period of mourning, dispose of half of them in a sacred river, and return the other half to the grave. The bones of *kāranavans* are sometimes [613] placed on an open platform under a jack-fruit tree, to which food offerings are made on days of propitiation. Other rites spring from the Nāyar view that the ghost requires appeasement rather than mere assistance to another world. Brahmans, for example, pour holy water into the mouth of a dying man to purify him for entry into the world of ancestors. Old-fashioned Nāyars offer rice gruel as a last act of appeasement.

76 184 564 613

Even the Sanskritic rites are in fact so adapted to Nāyar requirements that they carry a quite different emphasis of meaning from that associated with them by Brahmans. First, the role-structure of the rites is, of course, completely adapted to the descent system. A Nambūdiri deceased's chief mourner is his or her eldest son, or, if there is no Nambūdiri son, the eldest brother's son. A Nāyar woman's chief mourner is her eldest son; that of a man, the man next junior to him in the property group. But all males of the *taravād* junior to the deceased make subsidiary *bali* offerings to him in the period of pollution. Brahman spouses observe mourning and death pollution for each other. Nāyar spouses traditionally observe no mourning or pollution for each other, for they belong to different *taravāds* and have no mutual legal obligations. If a Nāyar dies in a wife's house, his body must traditionally be returned to his *taravād* for cremation. Shortly before or after the death of her husband, a woman goes to view his body for the last time. She is then ceremonially conducted out of the house on the north side—the side opposite to that from which the god of death arrives. She is returned to her natal home, and after this she may never reenter her dead husband's house. In Cochin, where men traditionally had no obligations to their children, a child did not observe death pollution for his genitor. [591] But in North Malabar, where children have an intimate relationship with the father in avunculocal residence during childhood, a man's sons make offerings for him during death pollution, and the eldest son is second-in-command to the chief mourner at the cremation. The

Nambudiri Brahmans

184 eldest son also traditionally observed *dīkṣā* for his father along with the matrilineal heir.
564 Age-rank within the *taravād* finds expression in the rites. Among Nambūdiri
613 Brahmans, if an unmarried but initiated boy dies, his father may perform his funeral
[795] and anniversary rites. For the souls of father and son are dependent upon one another for salvation. But among Nāyars, a man may not take part in funeral rites for one junior to him in the *taravād*, for respect toward juniors is inappropriate. A Nāyar who dies leaving no junior old enough to act as chief mourner is therefore buried without ceremony and no rites are performed for his ghost.

769 Nāyars have adopted the Brahmanical belief that funeral and anniversary rites
184 assist the spirit in its passage to another world, and that immersion of the ashes in
564 sacred water affords it peace. Like the Brahmans, they acknowledge the theory of rebirth, and hold that a spirit which is correctly propitiated after death is likely to
[782] be eventually reborn in a high estate. As in the case of the Brahmans, the theory of *karma* provides the Nāyars with a moral rationale for their high position in the caste system, and it is chiefly in this connection that I have heard it quoted. It is difficult to discover how old are Sanskritic beliefs concerning the soul among Nāyars, and they are not uniform at the present day. Most Nāyars use the word *pretam* to refer to the ghost or the soul in all contexts. This is a Sanskrit word (*preta*) for a malevolent ghost, but it is used by Nambūdiri Brahmans only for alien malevolent ghosts. A few Nāyars stated that that aspect of the soul which is reborn is the *ātmā*. This Sanskrit word is used by Brahmans for the soul in connection with rebirth and with union with the universal soul, called *paramātmā*. The *ātmā*, these Nāyar informants say, is neither malevolent nor beneficent. It cannot be understood by ordinary people and is a subject for philosophers. The *pretam*, by contrast, is the punitive ghost of an ancestor or of one who died violently. It can be only too easily understood even by the ignorant and does not require deep study. This belief in two souls, or in a soul and a ghost, may be modern, for it was given by only a few younger informants.

769 At all events, the Sanskritic rites of death are customarily adapted by Nāyars to
184 belief in a malevolent *pretam*, for at every step fear of the *pretam* is referred to. Whereas
564 Brahmans perform the rites ostensibly in order that the soul may be at peace, Nāyars have traditionally performed them in active fear of the ghost's retaliation should its
782 comfort not be ensured. During the days of pollution, Nāyars offer rice balls before a palmyra stem set up in the yard before the ancestral house. The *pretam* of the deceased is believed to enter this stem, and it is believed that it will attack the *taravād* with further death or with sickness if the offerings are not satisfactorily performed. During the offerings each Nāyar propitiant in turn wears round his waist a piece of cloth torn from the wrapper of the corpse in order to associate himself with the spirit. But inside this cloth Nāyars also tuck a knife, blade uppermost, to ward off the spirit's
[825] attack. After the offerings are made, both Brahmans and Nāyars clap their wet hands to summon crows to eat the rice balls. If the crows do not come, it is believed that the spirit has not received the offering. This may then be repeated on the advice of the astrologer. In Tanjore, Brahmans seemed to regret the miscarriage of the offering
[787] only for the sake of the spirit. But Nāyars regard it as an extremely evil omen, and fear the ghost's retaliation in the form of a second death within the *taravād*. The Brahmanical ceremonies themselves contain rites of segregation from the deceased
[764] which are susceptible to the interpretation that those who perform them wish to be rid of him. Such, for example, is the rite of dashing a pot of water at the head end of

769

the pyre toward the close of the cremation, and the disposal of the bones and ashes 184
in a river far from the ancestral house. But among my Brahman informants in Tanjore 564
these rites were carried out without explanation, and hostility to the dead seemed to 782
find no conscious expression. Nāyars performed the same rites in full consciousness 764
of fear and hostility to the ghost. Even at the end of the *dīkṣā* period when the chief
mourner has deposited the ashes in a river, Nāyars believe that Bhairava and Kāla, [716]
messengers of the god of death, dog the mourner's footsteps back to his ancestral
house. He is out of danger from them only after performing final offerings in the house
which gather the ghost to its forebears and thus appease its wrath. Nāyars, like Brah- [152]
mans, express grief at a death and engage in ceremonial weeping, although neither
caste weeps with the loud vehemence characteristic of the lower polluting castes. But
whereas Brahmans give full expression to grief and guilt, suppressing the hostile
aspect of their ambivalence, Nāyars perform the same rites in consciousness both [illegible]
grief and of hostile fear of the dead.

The traditional Nāyar rites and beliefs illustrate the common phenomenon of 76
elements of symbolic culture being diffused from one group to another and endowed 184
with a new emotional content and meaning in accordance with the needs of the 564
receiving group. The Nāyars presumably adopted Brahmanical death rites centuries
ago because of the prestige associated with certain distinctive customs of the highest
group in the caste society. The extensive contact with Brahmans afforded to them by
hypergamous marital unions gave them an unusual exposure to Sanskrit culture.
But through centuries of exposure to Brahmanical custom the Nāyars retained such [782]
characteristically "low caste" features as animal sacrifice to punitive deities, religious
possession, and propitiation of punitive lineage ghosts. I would argue that the Nāyars
and lower castes retained these customs because the emotional dispositions engendered
by their occupations and social relations—in particular, their ways of handling aggression
and relationships to authorities—are different from those of Brahmans. Presumably
also the Nāyars adapted the Sanskritic death rites to their own role structure
and belief system, because these grew out of and served to uphold norms of relationships
within the *taravād*.

THE CULTS OF ALIEN GHOSTS

In addition to lineage ghosts, Nāyars believe that the spirits of persons of any 769
caste who died prematurely from epidemic, accident, murder, or suicide can bring 184
misfortune to the living. Such ghosts, which I call alien ghosts, haunt the neighborhood
where they died and are particularly malevolent. The misfortunes they inflict include
many kinds of sickness; madness, female barrenness, cattle deaths, house fires, or
poltergeist activities. Like lineage ghosts, most alien ghosts are called *pretams*. In
Cochin, the Sanskrit word *piśāca* is sometimes used to distinguish them from lineage
ghosts. In Kottayam, there is an elaborate cult of certain particularly important
ghosts, which are called *teyyams* (a corruption of the Sanskrit word *deva* 'god').

In Cochin, one or more alien ghosts is sometimes attached to a Nāyar *taravād*, 769
whose members are obliged to arrange for its regular propitiation. The ghost may be 613
that of a person who is known to have died violently, within living memory, on the 782
taravād's land. Alternatively, when a misfortune occurs in a household, the astrologer
may newly discover that the ghost of some such person, long dead, is haunting the [778]
aravād's land. He may order a shrine to be built and propitiations to be made. Shrines

769 No clear distinction is made between alien ghosts and minor malevolent deities,
776 or demons, which are also sometimes called *pretams* in Cochin. Some demons are found
[782] throughout Malabar. Chief of these is Kuttichāttan, a spirit capable of all kinds of
[564] poltergeist activities. Sometimes, on the advice of an astrologer, a *taravād* privately
sets up a shrine to Kuttichāttan and arranges for his annual propitiation by a low caste
173 person in the same manner as an alien ghost. Often, indeed, local myths of particular
769 Kuttichāttans suggest that they have been derived from alien ghosts, whose legends
776 became fancifully embroidered with miraculous elements. The story of one Kutti-
782 chāttan, in this case enshrined in a Nambūdiri Brahman garden and propitiated by a
washerman, will illustrate this process. The god was said to have been born from a
sacrificial fire during ancestral ceremonies in a Brahman house. The Brahman house-
owner brought him up, and when he was adult sent him to graze cattle as a serf.
One day the Brahman's red-horned bull was missing, and the serf admitted that he
had killed and eaten it. The Brahman tied him to the rafters of the cowshed and had
him beaten to the point of death. Afterwards, the serf turned into a Kuttichāttan and
disappeared, but hovered above the Nambūdiri household bringing misfortune
until a shrine was set up for him. Educated Nāyar informants surmised that the spirit
had originally been that of an executed serf, later glorified by his propitiants as Kutti-
782 chāttan. Similarly, Kadangōtt Makkam, whose story was related above, is spoken
769 of as a form of Bhagavadi in some *taravāds* where she is propitiated.

184 I have so far mentioned the kinds of alien ghosts which may be attached to individual
taravāds in Cochin. In fact, however, cults of spirits and deities of the village are
776 grander and more numerous in Cochin than are those of the *taravād*. This parallels
564 the fact that the Cochin village was traditionally highly centralized as a unit of local
796 government. In this area, the temple of the village goddess Bhagavadi is managed
[794 either by a Nāyar village headman's lineage or collectively by a village community of
613] commoner Nāyars. Only the Nāyars and castes above them might traditionally
enter the temple, but all castes owed allegiance to the deity and took part in her
annual festival. The lowest castes of former serfs, and some other polluting castes
such as washermen, took part in the festival through the medium of one or more
minor malevolent deities or particularly important local ghosts which occupied small
[753] shrines at a distance from the main temple. Such spirits were thought of as servants
of the goddess, and at her will could "sow the seeds" of smallpox or other misfortunes
in the village. To avert such misfortune not only must the Nāyars and other high
castes propitiate the goddess herself, but the lower castes must also assemble, bringing
imitation bullocks and horses—the vehicles of the deity's demon servants—and make
[787] offerings to these demons. Selected persons from these lower castes became possessed
by the village ghosts or demons and, in masked dances, made oracular pronouncements
both to their own and the higher castes. During the festival, and for several weeks
before it, Nāyar households must also entertain these shamans privately in the court-
yards of their houses and make gifts of grain to them which warded off the demons'
wrath.

769 In Kottayam, the village was traditionally less centralized. Each Nāyar *taravād*
184 was an independent landowning body owing only tenuous allegiance to a chief. Cults
776 of deities and ghosts associated with particular *taravāds* are therefore more prominent
796 than are those of village temples, and it is in the former rather than the latter that
564 ritual cooperation between high and low castes is most prominent. Whereas a Cochin
613
782

769.

taravād may enshrine only one or two alien ghosts particularly associated with it, 184
leaving the majority of local ghosts to be propitiated at the central village temple, 776
a wealthy Nāyar *taravād* in Kottayam builds shrines in its garden for six or eight 796
alien ghosts and finances elaborate propitiations on their behalf. Such spirits are in 564
Kottayam called *teyyams*. As in Cochin, the spirits are often the ghosts of Nāyar or
low caste persons who died violent deaths—for example, girls who died violently 613
before marriage, women excommunicated or executed for sexual offences, persons 782
killed by lightning, servants executed by their masters, or warriors who died in battle. Usually, miraculous elements are interwoven into their legends. Sometimes, they become merged with common minor deities such as Vettakkorumagan, Kandhākaranan, or some species of Bhagavadi. In a few cases, they have become associated with some episode from the puranic myths and their human origin is lost sight of. As in the village temple rites of Cochin, these ghosts in Kottayam are propitiated, on behalf of the Nāyar *taravād*, by selected persons from the lower castes. These are chiefly Vannans (washermen) and Malayans (exorcists).[22] Annually, the propitiants assemble in the Nāyar courtyard and recite the myths of origin of their spirits. Later,
they make and receive blood sacrifices to the spirits, and finally, while possessed by [787]
them, perform spectacular masked dances and declare the spirits' satisfaction to an assembled company of many castes. These festivals take place throughout the whole of several nights in the month of January to February and draw vast crowds from the surrounding neighborhood.[23]

I have so far dealt with modes of propitiation of, and possession by, alien ghosts. 787
In addition, both in Cochin and Kottyam, Nāyars believe that certain persons can, 754
through appropriate rites and spells, gain private control over alien ghosts and minor 564
deities and engage in witchcraft or sorcery through their power. In what I call witchcraft,[24] the individual uses the power of his patron spirit in order to take the form of a
bull, dog, jackal, or other animal. In this form he touches his foe in the night, causing [753]
him to fall ill with fever, to become insane, or even to die. Witches always belong to
one of the lowest castes of Parayans, Pulayans, Pānans or (in Kottayam) Malayans. [761]
They usually attack persons of Nāyar or other high caste whom they themselves hate. Occasionally, however, a normal person of any caste, even a Nāyar, may hire a witch to attack a personal enemy.

A sorcerer performs rites and recites spells to an alien ghost or minor deity over which he has control and causes it to pass magically into the body of an enemy, thus bringing about fever, miscarriages in women, insanity or death. Sorcerers can also bring about the deaths of cattle. Nāyars attribute sorcery chiefly to lower caste persons. For whereas the Nāyars predominantly worship Bhagavadi and certain Sanskrit deities, the castes below Nāyars specialize in the propitiation of evil ghosts and minor deities, and it is solely with these lower supernatural beings that witchcraft and sorcery are associated. Washermen, astrologers and umbrellamakers, who specialize in exorcising ghosts from the bodies of patients, are particularly suspected by Nāyars of themselves engaging in sorcery. Nāyars do, however, occasionally suspect Nāyars of other lineages, particularly affines with whom they have quarreled, of practicing sorcery or of hiring low caste witches or sorcerers to attack them.

Witchcraft does not usually require the diagnosis of an astrologer. A Nāyar of nervous disposition simply suspects that a low caste man has bewitched him if he falls ill after encountering an animal in the night. Sorcery is usually diagnosed by an

The times have changed things a little: a little only 178
because after all the change is on the surface: it is not
radical. Now-a-days, when there is a penal code to deal [671]
with persons who kill others, the Nâyar cannot keep a [595]
concubine of a caste (not a clan) lower than his own
without fear of social ex-communication. The killing, [564]
except perhaps now and then *sub rosâ*, is a thing of the [585]
past.

The custom which permits the woman to cohabit with 582
a man, her equal or superior in caste, has been alluded to
more than once. I will now make some use of the 581
(Government) Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, [127]
published in 1894, which contains much information
which is extremely valuable to the anthropologist and
the folklorist, and none the worse for being found
together with views and opinions with which he cannot
agree. One of the points to which the Commission
directed special attention was "as to the customs
connected with Hindu marriages in Malabar" and the
evidence collected respecting these may be accepted as
correct, and the delineation of existing custom may be
taken as authoritative. Now the custom which permits
the man to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale
than himself prohibits the woman from exercising the
same liberty. "This is called the rule of *Anulómam* and
Pratilómam. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulómam* from *anu* =
with + *lómam* = *rómam* = the hair: going with the hair or
grain. So *Pratilómam* means "going against the hair or
grain." According to this usage a Nâyar woman, consorting
with a man of a higher caste follows the hair,
purifies the blood, and raises the progeny in social
estimation. By cohabitation with a man of a lower
division (clan) or caste, she is guily of *Pratilómam*; and,
if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she
would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole
family being boycotted."

A corollary of this custom is that a Nambûtiri [783]
Brâhman father cannot touch his own children by his
Nâyar consort without bathing afterwards to remove the
pollution. The children in the Marumakkattâyam family [851]
belong, of course, to their mother's family, clan, caste.
They are Nâyars, not Nambûtiris; so the Nambûtiri
cannot touch them without pollution.

The rule of *Anulómam* and *Pratilómam* appears to be [184]
observed with the utmost strictness and thoroughness;
one finds it obtaining between members of the same clan
inhabiting different parts of the country. Mention of this

582 was made on page 83, where it was said that a woman
564 of any clan of North Malabar may not consort with a
184 man of the same clan name belonging to South Malabar.
Following this principle, the man may do so. A woman
of South Malabar (inferior), mating with a man of her
own clan name of North Malabar (superior), would be
following anulômam; but a woman of North Malabar
cannot, under pain of being guilty of pratilômam, mate
with a man of her own clan name of South Malabar.
564 Alliances between the people of North Malabar and
484 South Malabar seem to be extremely rare; partly, perhaps,
because of this custom which is all compulsive,
784 partly because the Nâyar women of North Malabar
[628] cannot cross the river which marks the boundary between
the two. Nor, as said before, can the Nâyar women of
Chirakkal, the northern-most portion of Malabar, cross
the river which lies between it and South Canara to the
northward. Thus, they cannot go beyond their northern
or southern boundaries. The origin of this interdiction
to cross the river southwards has been explained to me
as emanating from a command of the Kólattiri Rajah in
days gone by, when, the Arabs having come to the
country about Calicut (South Malabar), there was a
chance of the women being seized and taken as wives.
An explanation which is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition
to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to
have originated in much the same way, but I have not
564 noted precisely what it is. Again, men of the Kurup
clan of Katattanâd may mate with women of the
582 Nambiyâr clan who live in Kôttayam, but they may not
mate with women of the Nambiyâr clan living in
Chirakkal. The custom imputing superiority or inferiority
to those of a clan inhabiting a certain locality is
obscure; it has its counterpart elsewhere in Malabar.

"Except the Nambûtiri, the Nâyar has no other
793 priestly, spiritual or religious instructor; and it is for the
564 gratification of this Bhú-dévan (earth god) that the Sûdra
woman, if she has any religious instruction at all, is
taught that she was created." We have heard what
Hamilton has said about this (see Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I).
Though the first portion of this statement is not quite
accurate, for we have seen that the priests and religious
instructors of the Nâyars are not admitted to be, strictly
speaking, Nambûtiris, yet on the whole it is not far wrong,
as the Nambûtiri is esteemed as a very exalted person,
and he may ply his music among the Nâyar ladies without
very much restriction. As remarked before, the

and other female friends of the girl then approach, and give 564
sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the boy, 613
and after taking their meals together from the same leaf, they 588
proceed to the pandal, where a cloth is severed into two parts,
and each part given to the Manavâlan and girl separately
in the presence of Enangans and other friends. The severing [586]
of the cloth is supposed to constitute a divorce."

If, as has been said, the "páttu" sung by the [533]
Brâhmani, in "*Rig Vêdaswaram*" is in substitution for
the Vêdas sung at the Nambûtiri's wedding—because
the Vêdas cannot be used by any but Brâhmans—this
part of the ceremonial seems to indicate imitation of the
Nambûtiris. The Brâhmani is not however a "Brâhman
lady" but merely represents one. In North Malabar she
is of the Nambîsan caste.

The ceremony is much more analogous to that obtain- [171]
ing in the Bellary district and round about it, through
which women, called Basivis, are, after an initiatory
ceremony of devotion to a deity, compelled (under certain
conditions) to follow no rule of chastity, but whose
children are under no degradation, than to the initiation
of the Dêvadâsi in her career of harlotry.* It must be [735]
said, however, that the ceremony, more especially as
modified by poor people, when the Manavâlan is repre- [184]
sented by a clay figure adorned with flowers, the handi-
work of the girl's mother, looks very like it. But what
demands consideration now is the position of Manavâlan
to the bride. Does the ceremony confer on him any of
the rights of a husband? There is much diversity of
opinion on the point. Some say it does, while some say
it does not. It seems certain that, as a rule, there can be
no cohabitation between the two as a mere corollary of
the tâli-tying ceremony. Should there be three girls in a
family, *i.e.*, in the same taravâd house, aged, say, 9, 5
and 3, the ceremony is always done for all three at the
same time. The only condition as to age of the girl is
that the ceremony must be done before she reaches
puberty. The bridegroom (to call him so) is selected after
consulting agreement between his horoscope and the
girl's. He is seated beside her in the marriage pandal,
and he invests her with the tâli. They eat of the same [824]
plantain leaf (used as a plate throughout Malabar). They [415]
are placed in the same chamber, to go through the fiction

---

* An account of the Basivis, their devotion to deities, etc., by the writer [113]
will be found in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay,"
Vol. II., 6 (1891).

564
613 of cohabitation; and on the fourth day the bridegroom
588 severs his connection with the girl, symbolising divorce
by cutting into two pieces the cloth (called kachai cloth)
● [184] which she wears. The tearing of the cloth is, however,
[586] confined to South Malabar. These are the essentials of
the ceremony, an adjunct to which is that, in spite of the
[765] divorce, the girl observes death-pollution when her
Manavâlan dies. The same Manavâlan may tie the tâli
[783] on any number of girls, during the same ceremony or at
any other time; and he may be old or young. He is
often an elderly holy Brâhman, who receives a small
present for his services. The ceremony is always the
occasion of feasting and jollification. The girl may
remove the tâli if she likes after the fourth day.

588 In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the
man who performs the rôle of Manavâlan is considered
to have some right to the girl, but in such a case it has
been already considered that he is a proper man to enter
into Sambandham with her. It will be as well to remark
here that almost invariably amongst the inferior races,
the aboriginals so to speak of Malabar, girls are married
[833] (their marriage is consummated) before puberty. The
fuss that was made a few years ago (by the shrieking
sisterhood) about the age of consent has had no effect
there.

613 The tâli-tying ceremony having been performed while
585 the girl is yet a child, the next step in the matter of
[588] her alliance with a man is the arrangement of the
Sambandham. As the rule nothing more than the consent of the girl and of her guardian, the Kâranavan of the family, is necessary. There is no religious formality. The tâli-tying ceremony dispenses with everything of the kind. There is, however, in some parts a tendency now-a-days "to surround the occasion of first cohabitation with a more or less elaborate ceremonial." It is quite an informal affair, arranged by the Kâranavans of the two families. Many a time a young fellow of 22 or 24, answering my question whether he had contracted Sambandham with any one, replied that the head of his family had not yet arranged a Sambandham for him. The wishes of the contracting parties—for in great measure it is a contract—and of the heads of the families practically settle the matter. Should the parties find they are unsuited, they part. There is no dragging on under a bondage intolerable to both.

585 The following account was given by Mr. Chandu
184 Menon (a Nâyar) to the Commission. He says:—

“The variations of the Sambandham are the Pudamuri, 585 Vastradánam, Uzhamporukkuka, Vitáram Kayaruka, etc., which 184 are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malayali who would not readily understand what is meant by *Sambandham tudan guga* (to begin Sambandham). The meaning of this phrase which means “to marry” is understood throughout Kéralam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it.

“It is thus found that Sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among Marumakkattayam Nâyars. It will also be found on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this Sambandham ceremony, all over the Kéralam, are in the main the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically : the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony : the usual hours at which the ceremony takes place : the presentation of the *danam* (gifts) to the Brahmans : the sumptuous banquet : the meeting of the bride and the bridegroom,—are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted Sambandhams in all parts of Kéralam alike. But here I would beg to state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to, are gone through at all Sambandhams among respectable Nâyars, and I would further say that they ought to be gone through at every Sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the Sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of Sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the Putamuri, or Vastradanam, as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of Sâmbandham differ from it. Of all the forms of Sambandham I consider the *Pudamuri* form the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. Of course my description will be borne out by the evidence that is before us. The preliminary ceremony, 585 in every Putamuri, is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in 787 the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the 184 bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf, with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes

585
184 agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the
[787] marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of
cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's Kâranavan,
and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and
[574] the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and
the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth;
and this preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed
at all Putamuris in North Malabar, is called 'Putamuri Kurikkal,'
but is unknown in South Malabar.

"Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the
celebration of the Putamuri, the bridegroom visits his Kâra-
[584] navans and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The
bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and
[613] nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the
[564] day appointed the bridegroom proceeds, after sunset, to the
house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends.
He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house
by the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends to seats
[431] provided in the tekkini, or southern hall of the house. There
the bridegroom distributes presents (*danam*) or money gifts to the
[574] Brahmans assembled. After this the whole party is treated
to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to
[787] appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it
accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then
taken by one of his friends to the *padinhatta* or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the house, called padinhatta, in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and *Ashtamangaliam*, which consists of eight articles symbolical of *mangaliam* or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves of the cocoanut tree, an arrow, a looking glass, a well washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round wooden box called 'cheppu' made in a particular fashion. These will be found placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groom's-man enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloth and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east with the Ashtamangaliam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groom's-man then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride, sprinkles rice over

the lit-up lamps, and the head and shoulders of the bride and the bridegroom, and the bridegroom immediately leaves the room, as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkini or southern hall he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride. 585 184 [431]

"This is an unvarnished account of a 'Putamuri.' Next morning the Vettilakkettu or Salkâram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is a feasting, etc., in honour of the occasion.

"Uzhamporukkuka, or Vídáram Kayaral is a peculiar form of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the description given above, that the Putamuri is necessarily a costly ceremony, and many people generally resort to the less costly ceremony of Uzhamporukkuka or Vídáram Kayaral. The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the same as Putamuri; but it is celebrated on a smaller scale. There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The toasting is confined to the relations of the married couple. The particular incident attached to this form of marriage is that the husband should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the regular Putamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered to in North Malabar, and instances in which the husband and wife joined by Uzhamporukkuka, or Vídáram Kayaral ceremony, and with grown-up children being the issue of such marriage, undergoing the Putamuri ceremony some 15 or 20 years after Uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable the husband to take the wife to his house, are known to me personally.

"The Sambandham of South Malabar, and the Kidakkorakalyánam of Palghat have all or most of the incidents of Putamuri, except the presenting of the cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is also *Salkdram* ceremony, wanting in South Malabar as the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house after marriage."

But all this formality and ceremonial is not the rule. The Sambandham is always a matter for careful arrangement, in which the wishes of the parties to it are considered, and which it is expected will bring mutual benefit to the two Taravâds concerned.

In South Malabar the girl or woman never lives in her husband's house; she lives on in her own Taravâd house and is there visited by her husband. The ordinary huggermugger, which sometimes stultifies all pleasure in existence, is thus avoided. In North Malabar the woman 591 184

591 184 lives in the house with her husband. A point to be noted in this connection is that, when her husband dies, she must leave his house and return to her own at once, before his body is carried out. According to the Kêrala Mâhâtmyam the women in North Malabar (should) live with but one man at a time.

58 We still, after the manner of children, confound words with things, so it is not surprising that the unfortunate Commission arrived at the conclusion that the institution of marriage was and is entirely absent from the Marumakkaṭṭâyam system. "The parties do not plight troth, and do not call God to witness their union." And so forth. But with this conclusion, suitable enough to the high-flown moralist or to the restless beings who would regardlessly sweep away the long results of time and improve on the process of natural development, imposing fanciful arrangements of their own, the anthropologist cannot at all agree. The Sambandham, a regularly formed, and certainly not haphazard alliance between a man and a woman, having the full sanction of the community, is marriage in every sense of the word. If the tâli-tying ceremony gave the girl free liberty, we might well suspect that the Sambandham followed a ceremony, [848] not a marriage ceremony. But such is by no means the case, for, should the woman who is unmarried, for whom Sambandham has not been arranged, or whose husband, the man with whom she had had Sambandham, is dead—there is no such thing as widowhood,—bear a child, she is disgraced, much as is the Brâhman widow under the same circumstances.

581 585 What then is the meaning of the assertions of the exponents of the orthodox view that the woman need not be chaste; and so on? The question is not an easy one to answer, but I think we may say with confidence that this orthodox view has been, in some measure, propounded by the Nambûtiris for their own gratification. [684] I have myself known several tragedies arising out of unfaithfulness, and I believe the old fashioned code of custom admitted the right of the husband to kill his wife's lover if he could, and also to kill his wife. No doubt in a great many cases the pair bound together in Sambandham lead lives ordinarily chaste. I do not, however, think that in actuality such is the rule with either party any more than it is in any other community, and sexual affairs are often treated lightly. With taste and consideration too, Hamilton, who arrived at Calicut in 1702, and spent some twenty odd years on the coast,

writes thus in speaking of the Nâyars :—"When the 581
man visits the woman he lays down his arms at the 585
door; but, if there are no arms at the door, any acquaintance
may visit her. To visit the house when there are [201]
arms at the door, or remove them, is death." Now-a-days [178]
a man leaves his shoes outside the door. Equality of the [562]
sexes in all sexual matters, the man and woman being on
terms of equality, having equal freedom, is certainly an
uncommon merit in the Marumakkattâyam system.
Either party may terminate the union—even after one 586
night of hymeneal bliss; and those who are unsuited to
each other sexually, or in the way of temperament, in
fact in any way, may put an end to their union and turn
towards other partners. It may be thought that this
liberty induced perpetual change, so it is as well to state
here that it does nothing of the kind. Mere arbitrary
divorce is very rare. Permanent attachment is the rule. 581
The basis of the system seems to be that the Taravâd 613
estate is held in trust for the support of the females and
of their descendants in the female line. This trust is 421
placed in the hands of the Kâranavan, the senior male
member of the Taravâd who is the legal guardian of
every member of it, and whose control of the Taravâd
property is absolute. The odd feature in the Marumak- [604]
kattâyam system is that a man has his nephews about [591]
him in the house, and not his sons. He lives in one
house, while his wife and family live in another. That [184]
is, in South Malabar; in North Malabar they live
together.

When we come to consider the degrees of relationship 582
within which marriage is prohibited, we find the rule is 613
that persons descended from a common female ancestor
are not at liberty to marry. Those of the same Taravâd
can never intermarry; but this prohibition does not of
course extend to the children of a brother and a sister,
who are naturally of different Taravâds. Again, the
principle that "no member of the Taravâd of a deceased [587]
wife or husband (is) eligible as the second wife or husband
is true only as far as the woman is concerned; for
a man may marry a woman of his deceased wife's
Taravâd. But he who does this is not in harmony with
social sentiment." We find this observance amongst the
forest Mûppans of Wynâd. In the case of a man's wife
dying, I found that a Mûppan could not take another
wife from her family.

The rule does not interfere with union between the children (or their descendants) of a brother and sister monial when copied meaninglessly, is surely food for 564 585 painful reflection. 178

The ceremony to be described is not one of cake and wine, for the doings of people who have reached that bathos have little interest to the anthropologist, though they may have some to the *observer* of social diversions, but the genuine ceremony as done in orthodox fashion in South Malabar without modern adornment will now be described. My informant says in the first place [582] the man should not enter into Sambandham with a woman until he is 30. Now-a-days, when change is running wild, the man is often much less. In [181] North Malabar, which is much more conservative than [184] the south, it was, however, my experience that Sambandham was rare before 27 on the side of the man. And now continue with the Note.* "The Kâra- 585 navan and the women † of his household choose the 564 bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare 613 not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and if they [787] agree, the astrologer is sent for and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the Sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and when on the point of leaving they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have Sambandham with—(naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony, the proposal is accepted with pleasure and the party (from the bridegroom's house) returns home."

Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for [574] the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom (for elders never accompany him) are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M. and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the Taravâd),

---

* Of which what follows is an abstract.

† My correspondent uses the word "Ladies." I prefer women, a finer word.

595 it certainly did not long ago. Polyandry exists amongst other castes, as we shall see by and by.

58 611 We must now leave the subject of marriage, which, simple though it is, is like most simple things extremely difficult to describe. The marital relation of the Nâyar is a very natural and simple affair; yet it is the *point d'appuis* of that system of inheritance through women which was once much more common than it is now.

804 Let us hope it will remain unchanged, and that the Nâyar will be able to say always (in his own tongue), with more regard for concrete truth than poetic insight "Das ewig' weibliche ziet uns hinan."

BIRTH: ANTE-NATAL AND AFTER CEREMONIES.

843 The following very interesting note on the ceremonies connected with birth, those preceding it as well as those following it, has been very kindly given by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nâyar; so I quote his own words:—

564 184 "A Nâyar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh month of pregnancy, she (at least, among the well-to-do class) bathes, and worships in the temple, every morning; and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter over which holy *mantrams* have been said by the temple priest or by Nambûtiris. This is generally done till delivery.

843 613 787 824 "*Puli-kuti.*—Another and even more important ceremony during pregnancy is the *puli-kuti* (lit., drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by the rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day, nay, even the very hour is fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins by the planting of a twig of the *ampasham* tree, on the morning of the day of the ceremony, in the principal courtyard *(natu-muttom)* of the *Taravâd.* At the appointed hour or *muhurtam*, the pregnant woman, after having bathed and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (*vatakini* or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastwards. The *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife,' whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the courtyard and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right-hand ring finger. Holding a

764

613 in the larger houses), and, if there is not, is taken to the [351] front yard where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandalwood paste and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is then done what is called the Potavekkuka ceremony or placing new cotton cloths (kóti mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the (deceased's) Taravâd followed by all the other members, also sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are used for tying up the corpse when being [184] taken to the place of burial or cremation. In some parts of Malabar the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is carried (well covered in the cloths) by hand. In either [204] case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is removed there is done another ceremony called Para Virakkuka (filling up pâras—a pâra is a measure nearly as big as a gallon). All adult male members of the Taravâd take part in it under the direction of a man of the Atikkurissi clan (who occupies the position of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen days, receiving as his perquisite all the rice and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit). It consists in filling up three pâra measures with paddy, and one edangâli ($\frac{1}{10}$ of a pâra) with raw rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a (burning) lamp of the kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela villâku. If the Taravâd is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the corpse before removal for cremation.

As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long stumps of the plantain tree, one at each end, one in the middle; on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The whole, or at least a part of the wood used should be that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age (junior) to the deceased, tears from one of the new cloths laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his waist, ties it round his waist, and holds in his hand, or tucks into his cloth at the waist a piece of iron, generally a

---

* The eldest male member of the Malabar Taravâd is called the Kâranavan, as noted already (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1); all male members, brothers, nephews and so on, who are junior to him are called Anandravans of the Taravâd.

824 place them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was
765 boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and
782 leads the way to a tank, on the banks of which the rice is
613 thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat it; for
[775] if they do, the impression is received that the deceased's
spirit is pleased with the offering; but if somehow it is
[825] thought that the crows will not come and eat it, the rice is
[231] thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to be allowed to eat it.
The women bathe after the rice has been thrown away.

765 When the ceremony which has been described has
been performed for the seventh time, *i.e.*, on the seventh day
613 after death, the piece of palmyra leaf is removed from the
574 ground, and thrown on the ashes of the deceased at the
783 place of cremation. During these seven days no member
824 of the Taravâd goes to any other house. The house of the
dead and all its inmates are under pollution: no outsider enters it but under ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing. A visitor entering the house of the dead during these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own house. During these seven days the Kâranavan of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel and go home, bathing ere they enter their houses.

[184] It is said that in some parts of Malabar the visitors
bring with them small presents in money or kind to help
[431] the Kâranavan through the expenditure to which the
funeral rites necessarily put him.

765 To hark back a little, it must not be omitted that on
the third day after the death, all those who are related by
663 marriage to the Taravâd of the deceased combine and
give a good feast to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours, who are invited, one man or one woman from each house. The person so invited is expected to come. This feast is called Patni Karigi. On the seventh day a return feast will be given by the Taravâd of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours.

Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no
[783] ceremony is observed; but the members of the Taravâd
remain under death pollution, and then on the fourteenth day comes the Sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the calcined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the Taravâd go to the place of cremation and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been sun-dried—not burnt by fire in the usual way—cover up

765 of boundaries. With the observance of the Pinda
Atiyantaram or feast of pindams, there is involved the
Dîksha, or leaving the entire body unshaved for 41 days,
or for a year. There is no variable limit between 41 days
[184] or a year. Forty-one days is permissible as the period
for the Dîkṣha, but a year is correct. The 41-day period
is the rule in North Malabar.

[593] I have seen many who were under the Dîksha for a
year. He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew
604 of the deceased. One member only of the Taravâd bears
the mark of mourning by his growth of hair, remarkable
302 enough in Malabar where every one as a rule, excepting
the Mâppila Muhammadans (and they shave their heads),
shaves his face, head (except the patch on the crown)
chest and arms, or at any rate his wrists. He who is
under the Dîkṣha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly
seeds to the spirit of the decased every morning after
[784] his bath; and he is under restriction from women, from
alchoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also tobacco.
When the Dîkṣha is observed, the ashes of the dead are
not deposited as described already (in the sun-dried
vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year after
death. When it is carried on for a year there is observed
every month a ceremony called * Bali. It is noteworthy
821 that, in this monthly ceremony and for the conclusion of
the Dîksha, it is not the thirtieth or three hundred and
805 sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the ceremonies,
but it is the day (of the month) of the star which was
presiding when the deceased met his death: the returning
day on which the star presides.

793 For the * Bali, a man of the Elâyatu caste officiates.
564 It has been said already ("Nambûtiri Brâhmans":
Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I), that the Elâyatus are priests for
765 the Nâyars. They wear the Brâhman's thread, but they
are not Brâhmans. They are not permitted to study the
Vêdas, but to the Nâyars they stand in the place of the
ordinary Purôhit. The officiating Elâyatu prepares the
rice for the Vêli when the deceased, represented by
Karuka grass, is offered boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds
and some other things. The Elâyatu should be paid a
rupee for his services, which are considered necessary
even when the man under Dîkṣha himself is familiar with
the required ceremonial.

765 The last day of the Dîksha is one of festivity. After
603 the * Bali the man under Dîkṣha is shaved. All this over

---

* Or Bâli.

796 Pishâri Kâvu which represents one of moderate importance
114 and truly one of the people, and its narration
is fairly complete. It seems to express the religion of
the Nâyars as it is when not tacked on to that of the
Brâhmans: as they formulate it of themselves entirely in
their own way.

796 An important local festival is that held near Palghat,
in November, in the little suburb Kalpâti inhabited
184 entirely by Pattar Brâhmans from the east; but it is not
a true Malayali festival and it suffices to mention its
existence for it in no way represents the religion of the
Nâyar. The dragging of cars on which are placed the
images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of
Jagganath, at Pùri in Orrisa, to Cape Comorin, is quite
unknown in Malabar excepting only at Kalpâti which is
close to the eastern frontier of Malabar. The Kalpâti
782 festival is the only "car festival" in Malabar.

[131] Near Chowghât (Chavagât), about 30 miles to the
southward of Calicut, on the backwater, an arm of the
[346] sea and separated from it by a thin strip of land between
the rivers, at a place called Guruvayûr, is a very important
temple the property of the Zamorin, yielding a
very handsome revenue. I visited this festival on one
occasion and saw there much which was of interest but
which must find place in the account of regions of others
[126] than Nâyars. Here purchase was made of a few offerings
such as are made to the temple in satisfaction of
[532] vows. A very rude representation of an infant in silver,
a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious
of all, a silver string which represents a man—the giver.
Symbolization of the offering of self is made by a silver
[326] string as long as the giver is tall! Goldsmiths working
in silver and gold are to be seen just outside the gate of
the temple ready to provide at a moment's notice the
object any person intends to offer, in case he is not
already in possession of his votive offering.

The subject of vows can be touched on but incidentally
here.* A vow is made by one desiring offspring, to have
his hand or leg cured, to have an ulcer cured, to fulfil any
desire whatsoever, and he decides in solemn affirmation to
himself (it is not necessary to go to a temple for the
purpose of vowing) to give a silver image of a child a silver

---

[113] * The subject of vows generally, including description of a Roman Catholic shrine at Cochin somewhat akin to that at Guruvayûr, was treated by me in an article which appeared in the 'Calcutta Review' for January 1899.

Another pilgrim was a man wearing an oval band of 796 silver over the lower portion of the forehead almost covering 788 his eyes; his tongue outside his teeth, kept in position 785 by a silver skewer through it. Had been fasting two years. Much under the influence of the god, and whacking incessantly at a drum in delirious excitement. The skewer was put in the day before, and was to be left in for forty days. Several of the pilgrims wore a handkerchief [782] tied over the mouth, they being under a vow of silence. One poor man wore the regular instrument of silence, the mouth-lock (a wide silver band over the mouth, the ends reaching over the cheeks, a skewer through both cheeks keeping the ends together * and, of course, the mouth open); and he sat patiently in a nice tent-like affair, about 3 feet high. People fed him with milk, &c., but he made no effort to procure food, relying merely on what was given him.

Pilgrims generally go in crowds under charge of a 796 priestly guide, one who, having made a certain number of 788 journeys to the shrine, wears a peculiar sash and other gear. They call themselves pujâris, and are quite *au fait* with all the ceremonial prior to the journey as well as with the exigencies of the road. As I stood there, one of these pujâris stood up amidst the recumbent crowd. He raised his hands towards the temple a little to the west, then spread out his hands as if invoking a blessing on the people around him. Full of religious fervour he was (apparently at any rate) unconscious of all but the spiritual need of his flock.

The use of the mouth-lock is common with the Nâyars when they assume the pilgrims' robes and set out for Palni, and I have often seen many of them garbed and mouth-locked going off on a pilgrimage to that place.

Brief mention must be made of the festival held at 796 Kodungallûr in the northernmost corner of the Cochin 184 State, along the coast, as it possesses some strange fea- 788 tures peculiar to Malabar and is much frequented by the Nâyars. Kodungallûr is near Cranganore, the old Dutch Settlement, where was, probably, the Musiris of the Greeks. Tiruvangaikalam, close by, will probably turn out to be the long lost site of the capital of the Chêra kingdom. I have been disappointed in obtaining particulars

---

* The mouth-lock is not peculiar to Malabar. A description of this [171] form of vow in another part of the Presidency was made by me in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay," Vol. II, No. 2 (1890). [113]

796 of the festival, so make the following excerpt from 184 Mr. Logan's well-known "Manual of Malabar." "It takes 788 the people in great crowds from their homes. The whole country near the lines of march rings with the shouts 'Nada-a Nada-a' of the pilgrims to the favourite shrines, chief of which is that at Cranganore (Kodungallûr) in the Native State of Cochin. Of what takes place when the pilgrims reach this spot perhaps the less said the better. In their passage up to the shrine the cry of 'Nada-a Nada-a' (march, march away) is varied by terms of unmeasured abuse levelled at the goddess (a Bhagavati) of the shrine. This abusive language is supposed to be acceptable to her. On arrival at the shrine they desecrate it in every conceivable way, believing that this too is acceptable; they throw stones and filth, howling volleys [564] of opprobrium at her house. The chief of the fisherman caste, styled *Kûli Muttatta Arayan*, has the privilege of being the first to begin the work of polluting the *Bhoot* [782] or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary to enter; cocks are slaughtered and sacrificed. The worshipper gets flowers only, and no holy water after paying his vows. Instead of water he proceeds outside and drinks arrack or toddy, which an attendant Nâyar serves out. All castes are free to go, including Tiyars and low caste people. The temple was originally only a Bhoot or holy tree with a platform. The image in the temple is said to have been introduced only of recent years." It is a pity Mr. Logan is so reticent. My information is that the headman of the Mukkuvans (fisher caste) opens the festival by solemnly making a fœcal deposit on the image. Here again there is the same strange union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and irreverent, with every mode of expressing the deepest religious feeling.

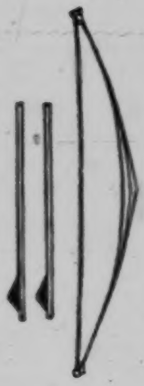
Leaving now the religion, expression of which may be seen at temple festivals and during pilgrimages to these scenes of religious fervour, we will turn to that which we see in the house of the Nâyar at home.

791 Plate XII* shows a man standing with a sword of the shape known as Nândakam. He is an individual called a Velichchappâd, and as he stood to be photographed by me his forehead and face streamed with blood from a self-inflicted wound on the head. The Velichchappâd is a 771 familiar character in Malabar. His profession illustrates the very mixed character of the Hinduism of the Nâyar, partaking as it does of much of the lower cult,—animism,

*[see cat. 116, plate facing p. 242 -- An.]

796 festival, about the time when the first crop of paddy is
[132] harvested. As a rule the Ônam season is one of bright sunshine following the almost continuous rain of June, July and August.

I once witnessed a very interesting game called êitû
526 (êiththu), played by the Nâyars in the Southern portion
796 of Kurumbranâd during the ten days preceding Ônam.
[184] Curiously, the locality and the period are, so to speak, fixed. There is a semi-circular stop-butt, about two feet in the highest part, the centre, and sloping to the ground at each side. The players stand 25 to 30 yards before the concave side of it, one side of the players to the right, the other to the left. There is no restriction of numbers as to "sides." Each player is armed with a little bow made of bamboo about 18 inches in length, and arrows or what answer for arrows, these being no more than pieces of the midrib of the cocoanut palm leaf, roughly broken off, leaving a little bit of the leaf at one end to take the place of the feather. In the centre of the stop-butt, on the ground, is placed the target, a piece of the heart of the plantain tree, about 3 inches in diameter, pointed at the top, in which is stuck a small stick convenient for lifting the "cheppu" as the mark which is the immediate objective of the players is called. They shoot indiscriminately at the mark, and he who hits it (the little arrows shoot straight and stick in readily) carries of all the arrows lying on the ground. Each "side" strives to secure all the arrows and to deprive the other side of theirs. A sort of "beggar my neighbour." He who hits the mark *last* takes all the arrows; that is, he who hits it, and runs and touches the mark before any one else hits it. As I stood watching, it happened several times that as many as four arrows hit the mark, while the youth who had hit it first was running the 25 yards to touch the "cheppu." Before he could touch it, as many as four other arrows had struck it; and, of course, he who hit it last and touched the mark secured all the arrows for his side. The game is accompanied by much shouting, gesticulation, and laughter. Those returning after securing a large number of arrows turned somersaults, and in saltatory motions expressed their joy.



In the south-east of Malabar, in the neighbourhood of 796
Palghat, the Ônam games are of a rougher character, the 526
tenants of certain jenmis (landlords) turning out each 184
under their own leader, and engaging in sham fights in which there is much rough play. Here, too, is to be seen a kind of boxing which would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman pugiles using the cestus in combat. The position taken up by the combatants is much the
same as that of the pugiles. The Romans were familiar [175]
with Malabar from about 30 B.C. to the decline of their [263]
power. We may safely assume that the "3,000 lbs. of pepper" which Alarie demanded as part of the ransom [648]
of Rome when he besieged the city in the fifth century, came from Malabar.*

Before ending this very incomplete account of customs 173
of the Nâyars, mention must be made of two more of 635
these, both odd. Ever since Châraman Perumal departed from the west coast of India in A.D. 825, setting sail for Arabia and Mecca, having divided up his kingdom,
His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore when ascending his throne says: "I ascend the musnud, and will [788]
rule until my uncle returns." The "uncle" is Châraman Perumal, the last sovereign of the west coast, who, having embraced the Muhammadan religion which was brought to his shores by Arab traders, proceeded to carry out a wild idea—so goes the legend—of receiving instruction from the Prophet himself! He never returned. To one princeling was given the territory now known as Travancore, and his surviving successor (through the female line of course) is the present
Maharajah of Travancore. To another he gave Cochin, [611]
the ruler of which State also inherits through the female line. To the ancestor of the Zamorin of Calicut the Perumal gave no territory, as to the others, but he gave him his sword (it is still in existence) with the
advice "to die and kill and annex." That he annexed 635
is quite clear, as he was the sovereign not only of Calicut but of the country round about when modern
Europeans first visited the west coast of India. Like the [788]
Maharajah of Travancore, the Zamorin repeats the formula that he rules until his uncle returns, but in his case it forms part of an elaborate and costly ceremony. The fort, which was the official residence of the Zamorin,

---

* See Madras Government Museum Catalogue No. 2, Roman Coins, by Mr. Edgar Thurston, Superintendent of the Museum.

the season which makes their persons shiver and quiver like 796
aspen-leaves before the breeze, becomes to them in the midst of [515]
all their ecstatic frolics an additional source of pleasure. In
short, all these merely tend to brace them up to an extent the
like of which they can scarcely find anywhere else.

"The two items described above, viz., the swinging process
and the beating on the water, have each its own distinctive significance.
The former typifies the attempt which these maidens [776]
make in order to hang themselves on these instruments and
destroy their lives in consequence of the lamented demise of
their sexual deity, Kamadevan. It is but natural that depth of
sorrow will lead men to extreme courses of action. The beating
on the water symbolizes their beating their chests in expression
of their deep-felt sorrow caused by their Cupid's death. Such
in brief is the description of a Nair festival which plays a
conspicuous part in the social history of Malabar."

Mr. Gopal Pannikar's chapter on "Local Traditions 776
and Superstitions" ("Malabar and its Folk") has special
value, for in it he recounts existing popular belief. He
tells us that to demon labourers are attributed the existence
of old dilapidated wells and buildings, demons who
perform Herculean tasks under orders of a chief. One
day these demons having finished their task disturbed
their chief when he was playing a game of chess, coming
to ask for more work, so he told them to count the waves
of the sea; and this is why they are still at work. He [825]
tells us why the crow has a long life and the fowl a short
one, and how that the former has but one eye, rolling in
a socket; how it is that the common squirrel is marked
on the back by the fingers of Vishnu; and much that is
of interest about the screech owl, the lizard, the crocodile,
and many other things. He recalls to my mind the [777]
popular belief accounting for the unluckiness which will
follow should one see the moon on the Chadûrti night, [821]
which I have heard in North Malabar. My note was
somehow mislaid. It is that the big-bellied god Ganapati 776
was once upon a time returning home in the moonlight 821
after a repast so generous that his person was much
distended, and unable to see his feet, he tripped and
stumbled. He looked around to see whether any one had
observed his discomfiture. There was no one but the
moon. The moon laughed, whereupon he cursed the
moon. Hence the belief that whoever sees the moon on
that night will be unlucky, probably defamed. Mr. Gopal [184]
Panniker, a native of South Malabar, does not mention
it, but in North Malabar women are scrupulously careful
not to see the moon or be for a moment in the moonlight

776
821 during that night for fear of calumny. There, the men
do not care much. We will now bid adieu to Mr. Gopal
[184] Pannikar, but not without thanking him for all he has
told us about his own people.

241 Uchâl (Uchaval) is the term used for the first three
days of the Malayalam month Makaram, usually falling
between the 15th and 20th January. All over Malabar,
[243] with the exception of Wynâd, above the ghâts, there are
two crops of rice every year, one with the south-west, one
[132] with the north-east monsoon. Elsewhere in Southern
India rice land is always irrigated, but in Malabar there
[776] is no such thing, practically, as irrigation, the heavy
rainfall rendering it unnecessary, and the earth goddess—Bhûmi Dêvi—brings forth her fruit under the stimulus of the rain from heaven. She produces the crops as a female produces her children, and from the 1st of the month Makaram, she rests until the cultivator again begins to disturb her, three months later, when the showers preceding the south-west monsoon fall. Uchâl is the period of three days when the earth goddess menstruates. Granaries and all receptacles of grain are closed during Uchâl—they are not even visited. Paddy is not sold. No implement of cultivation is touched. The rice to be used during the three days is pounded out beforehand and kept separate. But it is no season of gloom;
241 rather is it one of festivity. As particular forms of food
252 partaken on specific occasions have an interest of their
own, we must not omit description of the Uchâl cake—
262 the Pâla Ata. (Pâla—spathe of the areca-palm, Ata—cake). A paste is made of rice flour and water and spread thickly (about an inch thick) on one side of two pieces of the spathe of the areca-palm, each piece being from 2 to 3 feet in length and about 8 inches wide. Powdered jaggery, scraped cocoanut, powdered ginger, a little garlic and other condiments, are then put in small quantities on the paste. The two pieces of the spathe are then placed together, and they are stitched all round the edges. The whole is covered over with soft red mud and put into a fire where it is kept until the mud covering cracks. The cake is then cooked and ready for eating. It is cut and distributed to members of the family and friends.

564 In parts of Malabar the Tîyan tenants present these
262 cakes to their Nâyar landlords as a token of allegiance
or submission. Rice is the only article of food which if
466 prepared by a Tîyan the Nâyar cannot eat; so the Nâyar
241 has no caste scruples about eating the Pâla Ata prepared

APPENDIX A. 564

The account of the funeral ceremonies which has been given 764
is not, of course, full and accurate as regards all the clans; but [184]
it is precise as regards one, and suffices for the present to give
a clear idea of the ceremonies as performed by all. There are
many interesting features in the ceremonies as performed by the
Kiriattil clan. Want of space forbids more than the briefest
mention of some of these.

Those who carry the corpse to the pyre are dressed as 764
women, their cloths being wet, and each carries a knife on his 613
person. Two junior male members of the Taravâd thrust pieces
of mango wood into the southern end of the burning pyre, and, 564
when they are well lighted, throw them over their shoulders to
the southwards without looking round. Close to the northern
end of the pyre two small sticks are fixed in the ground, and
tied together with a cloth, over which water is poured thrice.
All members of the Taravâd prostrate to the ground before the
pyre. They follow the Enangru carrying the pot of water round
the pyre, and go home without looking round.

They pass to the northern side of the house under an arch made by two men, standing east and west, holding at arms length, and touching at the points, the spade that was used to dig the pit under the pyre, and the axe with which the wood for the pyre was cut or felled.

After this is done the "kodali karma" ceremony, using the spade, the axe and a big knife. These are placed on the leaves where the corpse had lain. Then follows circumambulation and prostration by all; and the leaves are committed to the burning pyre.

Nayar

121 [588] be elucidated only in terms of a psycho-analytic hypothesis. Part V of the essay is therefore an attempt to try out a psycho-analytic approach to Hindu ritual, and to show, with reference to one ceremony, that this approach permits a deeper analysis than is possible if we limit ourselves to a discussion of social function.

The use by anthropologists of psycho-analytic findings to interpret primitive myth and ritual is familiar from modern American writings; it has scarcely been accepted by British anthropologists. I admit that, for anthropologists, psycho-analytic theories must in the long run depend for their authority on analyses of a significant number of individuals in the society whose symbolism it is hoped to interpret. Such data are not, however, at present forthcoming, and in many Indian groups it is doubtful if they will be forthcoming before the myths and rites have died out. In the meantime, as I hope to show, the results of psycho-analytic work in the West can give us insights into the probable unconscious motives behind primitive religious practices, and allow us to formulate new if tentative hypotheses on the connexions between the kinship structure of a group and its religious symbolism.

[127] This essay therefore, while confined to the analysis of one ceremony, fulfils the terms of the Curl Bequest Competition, since it incorporates in a single theory field data recently collected on four Malabar kinship systems; uses the material of other anthropologists (see Aiyappan 1942, 1944; Dube 1953) who have worked on Indian initiation rites in the past ten years, to advance a sociological interpretation of these rites; and tests, with reference to these rites, certain hypotheses of the British school of psycho-analysts put forward in recent years.[1]

PART I. THE NAYAR *Tāli*-RITE IN SOUTH MALABAR AND COCHIN

635 175 564 184 [131] THIS AREA IS IN THE CENTRE OF THE MALABAR COAST, south of the Kora River and north of the Travancore-Cochin boundary. Before 1792, it comprised the mutually hostile kingdoms of the Zamorin of Calicut, the Raja of Walluvanād, and the Maharaja of Cochin. The area was temporarily conquered by the Zamorins in the late 15th century and Cochin and Walluvanād were made feudatory kingdoms. Probably for this reason, the Nayar sub-castes of Walluvanād and Cochin correspond closely to those of Calicut, since they owed their existence to a political system common to these three kingdoms. By contrast, the kingdoms to the north and south, where the Zamorins failed to penetrate, had different political systems and correspondingly different hierarchies of Nayar sub-castes. Today, the Nayars of South Malabar and Cochin still show greater cultural similarity, feel greater unity, and intermarry more freely than they do with Nayars to the north or to the south.

175 613 564 At the head of each of the central kingdoms was a royal matrilineage. Being at enmity, the royal lineages disputed for rank, would not intermarry, and, though exogamous, formed each a separate caste. Each however acknowledged itself inferior to the Nambūdiri Brahmans (landlords and priests) whose separate caste-organization extended throughout the Malabar Coast, and who were above and outside the laws of the separate kingdoms.

635 175 564 631 613 Below the royal lineages came the Sāmantans, chiefs (*nāduvaris*) of districts (*nāds*). These owed allegiance to the Raja and had administrative control over the next sub-caste, of Kiriyattil Nayars (called Vellayma Nayars in Cochin), the headmen (*desavaris*) of villages (*desams*). Below the Kiriyattils came three parallel sub-castes: Sûdra Nayars, Charna Nayars (respectively called Illath Sûdras and Swaroopattil Sûdras in Cochin), and Pallichans. Sûdra Nayars were hereditary tenants and retainers in villages where the land was owned by a patrilineal family of Nambûdiri Brahmans. Charna Nayars were retainers in villages owned by *nāduvari* or *desavari* lineages. Pallichans owed similar allegiance in villages owned by a branch of the

---

[1] For the psycho-analytic interpretation of this essay I am chiefly indebted to Freud (1913, 1918, 1919), Ernest Jones (1931, 1951), Melanie Klein (1932), and Roheim (1950).

588

[564] marriage rite. At the auspicious time, each girl was led in turn by her brother from the house
and seated on the plank. At a sign from the astrologer, the Brahman priest (called Elayad,
[793] a low sub-caste of Nambūdiris who officiate at Nayar funerals) handed the *tāli* to the bride-
groom, who tied it round the girl's neck. The nineteen couples were then secluded in the house
588 for the remaining three days and nights of the rites. Informants said that in modern times
when lineages were often large, the couples numerous and the girls sometimes infants, cohabita-
833 tion would be unlikely. It was not, however, forbidden, and appears formerly to have been
required. It is clear that the rite was ritually if not actually a defloration ceremony, as is
178 indicated by the saying *Tāli kettiu amma āyi* ('having had the *tāli* tied, a girl becomes a
[married] woman').

588 Next morning the party reassembled without the couples, and offerings to Bhagavadi
took place. The participants were a Sūdra Nayar oracle (*velichchappād*), a Vattekad (oil-monger)
782 Nayar sacrificial priest, and a Nayar boy who accompanied the oracle, carrying a staff to
the top of which was tied a brush of coconut flowers. These officiants perform similarly by
787 hereditary right at the annual Bhagavadi temple festival. The priest offered rice, paddy,
coconuts, incense, a burning lamp, and toddy before the branch of the milk-tree, following
793 which he sacrificed a cock and poured out a vessel of red blood-like liquid. The oracle then
donned a waist-band and anklets of bells and took a sickle in his hand. (These symbolize the
power of Bhagavadi: when he dons them it is believed that she enters and possesses the oracle.)
Accompanied by loud music, he leapt wildly in the air, shouting hoarsely and chopping
his forehead with the sickle till blood flowed down. In this frenzy he called out to the host
kāranavan that the goddess was appeased by his offerings. His possession then subsided and his
insignia were removed.

776 Bhagavadi is the Malabar goddess of war, smallpox, and the soil. Her idol, in the Nayar
village temple, is a hollow cylindrical stone, a symbol of the vagina, as the Brahmanical idol
[831] of Siva is the lingam, a symbol of the phallus. Bhagavadi is also worshipped as the oracle's
sickle, as a picture drawn in chalks on the floor, as the milk-tree (*Alstonia scholaris*), and as the
ancestral sword of a Nayar lineage. She is believed to have protected the Nayars in war. She
[753] is fierce and vengeful, her chief power being to inflict smallpox. She is propitiated by similar
[782] rites during smallpox epidemics, on the sixteenth day after a smallpox death, and on the last
night of her annual temple festival, during which she is angry with the villagers who must
[834] observe sexual continence.

The remainder of the second day, and the third day, were devoted to feasting and music.
588 On the fourth morning each couple went to the village bathing pool where, hand-in-hand,
they took a purifying plunge-bath. Then, decked in fine clothes, they returned to the lineage
[783] house. In the kitchen each couple ate a meal from the same loaf. The company was then
fed, but on this day, alone of all days, women ate before men. The bridegrooms received
[264] clothing and foodstuffs from the *kāranavan* and departed for their respective homes.

In Pālakkara the *tāli*-tier might remain with his bride as her first *sambandham* lover. At
588 the last *tāli*-rite two of the nineteen bridegrooms remained in association with their brides,
though one abandoned his shortly afterwards. The other seventeen girls formed unions with
184 other men of the village shortly after puberty. In all *tāli*-rites in this area, however, the 'bride-
groom' remained the ritual husband of his 'bride' throughout his life, though he need never
595 visit her again. At his death, the 'wife', together with her children by whatever physiological
[765] father, must observe fifteen days' pollution. Death pollution was otherwise traditionally
observed only for matrilineal kin: not until recently was it observed for the *sambandham* lover
[783] and the physiological father. The *tāli*-tier of a woman was regarded, moreover, as the ritual
father of her children. If they knew him, the children called this man *appan* (the Tamil word
[851] for 'father', used for the *genitor* by Tiyyars and Christians) as distinct from *acchan* (originally

Nayar

588 184 595 851

a Sanskrit word meaning 'the noble one') the Malayalam word used by Nayars for the *genitor* and all lovers of the mother. The *appan* had no obligations to nor rights in a child except that, at his death, the child observed pollution. Nevertheless, Pālakkara informants stressed that the *appan* was a child's 'real father', as the *tāli*-rite was a woman's 'real marriage'.

588 586 184 [765]

In Walluvanād and Calicut a different custom prevailed. After the final feast, the couples repaired to the marriage shed, where each ritual bridegroom tore in two the loin-cloth which had been worn during the three days of seclusion by his bride, retaining one half and handing the other to the girl. This ritual divorce indicated that the bride, though still in the status of a married woman, was now free to cohabit with whom she wished. She might however still take as lover the bridegroom who had divorced her. In spite of the 'divorce', the bride and her children observed pollution at the death of the bridegroom. In those lineages where the *tāli* was tied by a man of higher sub-caste, no cloth was severed after the rite, but the bridegroom, being an elderly man, was unlikely to cohabit with the girl again. However, she must, with her children, observe pollution at his death.

588 184 582 [613] [114]

At some periods and in some areas of South Malabar and Cochin it seems that the ritual bridegroom was forbidden to enter into *sambandham* with his bride. In 1510 Barbosa stated that the *tāli*-tier was sometimes a 'relation' of the girl, and in this case, when he had tied the *tāli*, he must go away 'without touching her nor more to say to her on account of being her relation'. If, however, he was not a 'relation', 'he may remain with her if he wish it, but he is not bound to do so if he do not desire it' (*ibid.* p. 124). Unfortunately, Barbosa did not define the categories of 'relations' who might tie the *tāli*, but the accounts of all other writers leave no doubt that the ritual bridegroom could never have been a matrilineal kinsman of the girl. It is probable that, the *tāli* being tied either by an *enangan* or by some elderly man of higher sub-caste from which the lineage was wont to draw lovers, the ritual bridegroom might sometimes be a man who had previously had relations with some older woman of the girl's lineage. In this case he would be prohibited from entering into *sambandham* with her by the rule which forbids a man to have relations, serially or concurrently, with two women of the same lineage.

588 833 114

Buchanan, an East India Company doctor, seems to assume that the *tāli*-tier must deflower the bride, but might never cohabit with her thereafter. In 1800 he wrote of South Malabar Nayars: 'The Nayars marry before they are ten years of age, in order that the girls may not be deflowered by the regular operations of nature; but the husband never thereafter cohabits with his wife. Such a circumstance, indeed, would be considered as very indecent' (Buchanan 1807, p. 411). But Buchanan's account may be untrustworthy, since he later says of North Malabar Nayars: 'The female Nayars, while children, go through the ceremony of marriage, both with Nambouries and Nayars; but here, as well as in the south, the man and wife *never* cohabit' (*ibid.* p. 513; my italics), thus contradicting his earlier statement that the 'bridegroom' must deflower the bride. However, Logan (1887, p. 135), though he does not say whether the *tāli*-tier was expected to deflower the girl, states that in South Malabar the ritual husband might not solicit his 'wife's' favours in after-life.

588 114

Since I have not seen the *tāli*-rite, but relied on informants' statements, the above account is necessarily incomplete. I now add details provided by earlier writers.

124 588 184 431

For Cochin, Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909-12, II, pp. 22-9) reports that in privileged families, the Maharaja gave permission for the rite, and the woman's kin made presents to him and to important Nambūdiris before it could take place. In retainer-lineages where an *enangan* tied the *tāli*, the Asān (military leader and, in modern times, schoolmaster) of the village must be present to give permission, and was paid money and foodstuffs by the woman's *kāranavan*. Similarly, in a Walluvanād village I visited, the *tāli* was tied in the presence of the *desavari*, who received gifts for his consent. N. Subramania Aiyar, quoted by Thurston &

588 Rangachari (1909, V, p. 520), reports that in Travancore, the 'leading villager' gave his
184 consent and received gifts from the bridegroom 'as if to recompense him'. This recalls the statement
431 of one informant of Pālakkara, who said he had heard a rumour that in ancient days, the
Asān of the village had the right to deflower retainer-Nayar women, a right which he might
forgo on payment of a sum of money.[1]

588 The *tāli* is, as Thurston & Rangachari observe, shaped like a leaf of the *Ficus religiosa*
824 (pipal) tree (*aswatha*). This tree is worshipped by Nayars, Nambūdiris, and Tamil Brahmans
831 as an embodiment of the Sanskrit god Vishnu. It is said to symbolize male creative power,
the female tree with which it is associated being the *veppu* or margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*).[2]
In the Tamil country, the two trees are frequently planted together in a mock-marriage
[842] ceremony, so that the creeping stems of the margosa may twine round the pipal tree like the
arms of a faithful wife round her husband. Among Nayars, Tiyyars, Nambūdiris, and Tamil
[788] Brahmans, barren women are counselled to march a hundred and eight times round the ficus
tree to obtain children. We are therefore probably justified in regarding the *tāli* as a phallic
symbol, presented to the bride as a sign 'that she may now do what she pleases'.[3]

588 Innes (1908, p. 174) and Krishna Menon (1894) reports that, traditionally, the bridegroom's
party approached the house flourishing weapons and shouting a war-cry. Later,
before tying the *tāli*, the bridegroom laid his sword across his lap, and the girl took an arrow
588 and a mirror in her hand. Mateer (1883) says that in Travancore, if the family were
184 too poor to perform the ceremonies, the girl's mother might tie her *tāli* before a sword or a
178 clay idol representing Kāma Devan, the Hindu god of passion.[4] Similarly, since the traditional
ceremony died out, many Pālakkara mothers take their immature daughters to some
776 Brahmanical temple dedicated to Vishnu (the god of marital and domestic prosperity) and
themselves tie the *tāli* before the god.

Fawcett (1901, pp. 229–32) observes that the girl's brother carried her into the marriage
588 hall from the house, bore her three times round it, and seated her to the left of the bridegroom;
[593] Innes (1908, p. 174) remarks that she might be carried there either by her brother or her
kāranavan. On the fourth day, after their bath, the couple returned to the girl's ancestral
house to find its doors shut against them. The bridegroom must force open the doors before he
[613] could take his seat with his bride in the kitchen where they ate a meal together. Alternatively,
he might enter the house last in the procession, when boys of the girl's lineage pelted him with
plantain fruits, which he must ward off with his shield.

According to Innes (*ibid.* p. 173), before the rite the girl was secluded for three days
[788] and nights in an inner room of the house, with a brass hand-mirror in her right hand, an
arrow in her left, and the eight auspicious objects before her. On the second morning she
went to the bathing pool, on the bank of which she must, after bathing, jump thrice over a
brass vessel of water with an unhusked coconut on top, overturning both at the third time.

588 I turn to the rite in the royal lineages. In the Cochin lineage, which prides itself on
613 ancient, 'true' Kshattriya descent, the rite took the form of a Brahmanical marriage ceremony
564 with Sanskrit *mantras* from the Grihya Sutras. It was performed separately for each girl before
184 puberty by a Nambūdiri, who must actually deflower the girl on the night of the ceremonies.
The bridegroom received a fee and departed after four days. The girl might then cohabit
833

---

[1] Dr Aiyappan (1932) similarly reports that the Asān in some areas deflowered Nayar women at a ceremonial initiation.

[2] For a discussion of the symbolic significance of this tree see Dubois (1906, p. 652).

[3] My interpretation of the *tāli* as a phallic symbol is the more likely in that among Tamil Smartha Brahmans of Tanjore, the marriage *tāli* bears engraved upon it a *lingam*, the phallic emblem of Siva.

[4] This modern rite recalls the ceremonial marriage of the Devadasis (temple-dancers and prostitutes) in the Tamil country, in which the dedicated girl's *tāli* is tied by the temple priest before the god of the temple, or, if a girl fails to become dedicated to a god before puberty, by her mother in the presence of a sword. The 'marriage' is followed after puberty by the nuptials, at which a wealthy high caste man of the neighbourhood passes the night with the girl as the first of her lovers.

Nayar

588 613 564 184 833

with any Nambûdiri Brahman who had the consent of her *kāranavan*. Until recently, polyandry and divorce were said by my Nayar informants to have been even commoner than among Nayars.

In the Zamorin's and the Walluvanād lineages the *tāli* was tied by princes of the more ancient royal lineages of Kodungalur and Beypore. Actual defloration does not seem to have been obligatory in recent times. Kerr's (1811, ch 6) translation of Castaneda, however, states that

> . . . these sisters of the Zamorin, and other kings of Malabar, have handsome allowances to live upon; and, when any of them reaches the age of ten, their kindred send for a young man of the Nayar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin; after which he hangs a jewel around her neck, which she wears all the rest of her life as a token that she is now at liberty to dispose of herself to anyone she pleases as long as she lives.

Of the Zamorin's own marriage to a Nayar wife, Hamilton (1727, p. 172), a Scottish trader, wrote in 1723: 585 793

> When the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambourie or chief Priest has enjoyed her, and, if he pleases, may have Three Nights of her Company, because the first Fruits of her nuptials must be an holy Oblation to the God she worships; and some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the Clergy the same Tribute; but the common people cannot have that Compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the Priest's place themselves.

Barbosa (Stanley, 1866, p. 124), writing in a more robust age, 1510, says of the Nayar commoners: 'And from that time forward [i.e. after the *tāli*-rite] the mother goes begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women.' 588 833

The immediate significance of the *tāli*-rite for Nayars of this area, taken in conjunction with their combined polyandry and polygyny, is clear. A Nayar *taravād* is perpetuated by its women. Hence the extraordinary value set by Nayars on obtaining a sufficiency of husbands and thus of children for their lineage. The *tāli*-rite dramatizes this need of the lineage for male sexual partners who ('like breeding bulls', as a Calicut prince remarked) will fulfil the one role denied to men of the lineage in respect of their sisters and nieces. The bridegroom's role as *enangan* was significant in a caste community in which sex relations were promiscuous. In this rite, through a chosen representative, the local caste group as a whole 'married' the lineage as a whole, and ritually set free the procreative powers of its girls to perpetuate their lineage. The ritual 'divorce' on the fourth day freed the girls from their particular bridegrooms, as the fee which accompanied it freed their lineage from further obligations to these men. If he wished to perpetuate the relationship, the ritual bridegroom must come again in a different role, without prior claims, merely as one of a series of lovers. The 'divorce' foreshadows the jealousy with which Nayar men regard the post-puberty lovers of their sisters: these are prevented from interfering in household matters, and may be dismissed by the brothers in a momentary fit of pique. The separation of the *tāli*-rite (the ritual marriage) from the later *sambandham* unions (initiated without rites) thus underlines the necessity to the lineage of husbands and fathers, while denying to the individual husband and father a legally and socially significant role in relation to his wife and children. 588 613 182 [586]

The tying of the *tāli*, in aristocratic lineages, by a Nambûdiri Brahman or other personage of higher caste in place of an *enangan*, fits in with the custom of hypergamous marriage. The higher caste bridegroom's role gives ceremonial recognition to the overlordship of *nāduvaris* over *desavaris*, of kings over *nāduvaris*, and in religious matters, of Nambûdiri Brahmans over all. The higher caste lover had no more rights in his mistress than the Nayar and even fewer obligations to her. At the same time the function in the political and economic systems of these high caste men's roles as ritual and physiological husbands and fathers to members of the castes below them must not be underestimated. Today the old political system has 588 564 [178]

588 On the day fixed the couple dressed in cloths given by the girl's father, and the girl was
led into the hall by her mother's brother and seated on the plank. The boy was carried in
on the shoulders of his mother's brother, borne thrice round and seated to the right of her,
her own mother's brother's wife sitting on her left. The girl's father three times asked the
astrologer if the auspicious moment had come, after which the bridegroom tied the *tāli*.
Aiyappan states that the boy placed the *tāli* round the girl's neck, where it was tied behind by
her mother or her father's sister. Iyer reports that in Cochin, the boy stood behind the girl
and tied it himself. The couple were given a sweet drink as at a normal marriage. The girl
was then secluded for three days with the new loin-cloth which the boy had worn kept always
beside her. On the fourth morning, the couple bathed together and were taken to worship
184 at the temple. In South Malabar, though not in Cochin, the loin-cloth was then taken from
586 the girl's room and cut in two, as at the divorce in a Nayar rite. The bridegroom then took
613 a thread of it and, as at a normal divorce, snapped it saying to the girl's brother, 'Here is your
sister's *āchāram*.' He departed taking the two pieces of cloth and a few rupees paid by the girl's
family. As among Nayars, a whole *taravād* might hold the ceremonies for all its immature girls,
separate bridegrooms then being required for each.

184 This ceremony, more clearly than the North Malabar Tiyyar one, is a mock-marriage
588 of the girl to a vicarious husband. It would be less appropriate for the mother's brother's
582 wife or the father's sister to tie the *tāli* in this group, since cross-cousin marriage, though
preferential, is not enjoined to the extent which it is in the north. Even so, the mother's brother's
wife, perhaps as potential mother-in-law, performs preliminary rites. On the face of things,
however, it seems extraordinary that in this group where the marriage bond is strong, father-
hood known within a group of brothers, inheritance patrilineal, and the wife at least partly
incorporated into the lineage of her husband, such a rite should be performed at all. It is
significant that the Tiyyar *tāli*-tier does not take over the role of ritual father to the woman's
children by her later husbands, nor does he in any sense remain a husband to the woman.
765 Unless she is married to him after puberty, neither the girl nor her children observe pollution
for his death nor use kinship terms for him. This difference between South Malabar Tiyyars
60 and Nayars befits the difference between Nayar matriliny with its denial of the social aspect
of physiological paternity, and the Tiyyar patrilineal lineage system with its emphasis on the
613 legitimacy of children. But why did the Tiyyars perform the rite at all? Since they themselves
have no answer to this question, except that it was part of ancient custom, we are driven to
look for an explanation in terms of unconscious motivations.

PART V. INTERPRETATION OF THE *TĀLI*-RITE

184 THE CEREMONIES VARY IN DETAIL but have certain features in common (see Chart I). The
588 rite must in all cases be performed before puberty, and is always a symbolic defloration.
This is most clear in the royal lineages, where the bridegroom actually deflowers the girl.
831 Among South Malabar Nayars, the aggressive approach of the bridegroom's party suggests
a sexual attack, as does the action of the bridegroom who places his sword across his lap
before tying the *tāli* on the bride. When, on the fourth morning, the bridegrooms force open
the shut doors of the girls' lineage house, it is clear that they are, as strangers, making an
aggressive entry into the *taravād*, i.e. symbolically deflowering its women.

In all the ceremonies other ritual acts make it clear that the rite is a symbolic defloration. The lit wick, arrow, sword, coconut tree, staff, sun, sky, peacock-feathers, the corner-post of the marriage-shed and the bamboo rod stuck in a coconut are readily recognized as phallic symbols recurrent in South Indian ritual; while paddy, rice, coconut inflorescence, rouge-bottle, bell-metal mirror (worshipped in temples as symbol of Bhagavadi), mud pot of water,

Nayar
Tiyyar

and coconut symbolize female fertility. The couple's act of eating from the same leaf, and the 184
Tiyyar girl's act of mixing sweet porridge, grinding with a grindstone, and 'cohabiting' 588
with the loin-cloth of the bridegroom, may be interpreted as symbolic intercourse. 831

In the North Malabar Tiyyar rite the barber as well as the *tāli*-tier appears as a vicarious
bridegroom. Before the *tāli* is tied, he uncovers the girl's face and head, an act performed by [564]
the bridegroom in many Hindu marriage-rites. He then places coins in her hair and pours on to them coconut water from an *aswatha* leaf. Since this leaf represents Vishnu and male creative power, I regard the pouring of coconut water from it on to the coins as symbolic intercourse.[1] The barber is paid in cloths for his services, much as the ritual bridegroom is paid in South Malabar Nayar and Tiyyar rites.

In all the groups, then, it was necessary for a girl to be, at least symbolically, deflowered
before puberty. Next, the girl is secluded for three days before the rite under circumstances
almost identical with those of the first menstruation. Like a woman during that period, she [881]
might not eat meat, salt, tamarind or chillies, nor see a man, tree, plant, crow, dog, or cat. Among the Tiyyars, Thurston (1906, p. 3) reports that in some areas she kept an arrow, said to be the arrow of Kama Devan, always beside her.

This seclusion with an arrow looks like symbolic cohabitation with a token bridegroom,
as in the South Malabar Tiyyar girl's seclusion with the loin-cloth of the bridegroom *after* [841]
the *tāli*-rite. At the same time, it must be noted that among Tiyyars, Nayars, and also some
Tamil castes, a woman keeps beside her a knife during menstruation; it is said to ward off [789]
attack by evil spirits.

These observances of the first menstruation and of the mock-menstruation before the *tāli*- 841
rite must be seen in the context of a set of beliefs concerning menstruation in general. It is believed that a Nayar or Tiyyar woman is in a dangerous as well as a polluting condition
during menstruation, especially the first. It is feared that, if she disregards any of the pro-
hibitions, she may be raped by evil spirits, appearing as hairy animals. This circumstance [833]
results in hysterical, dissociated behaviour or in dangerous loss of blood. It is said also that if a man foolhardily copulated with a menstruous woman, he would become impotent. Similarly, if the woman were to urinate at the base of a tree, or walk in a paddy-field, the tree or the paddy would wither and die. If she were to approach a temple or the ancestor-shrine of her *taravād*, the temple-god or the ancestors might inflict her with excessive bleeding, or strike her dead.

To interpret these beliefs, I make use of Ernest Jones's (1931, pp. 44, 54, 73) theory 000
that the evil spirits of myths, superstitious beliefs, and daytime phantasies arise from the same unconscious source as those of nightmares, and that the evil shapes seen in nightmares invariably issue from repressed incestuous desires, the fear engendered by which causes the desired object to appear in terrible form. The hairy animal-spirits who may rape a menstruous woman are thus male parent-imagines. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact of the fear of attack from a god or dead *kāranavan*'s spirit (patrilineal among South Malabar Tiyyars, matrilineal in the other groups), should the menstruous woman approach them. Since it causes dangerous bleeding, the attack by a god or an ancestor is evidently sexual, like that by the hairy animals: all therefore probably indicate an unconscious dread of being raped by a male parental figure with, underlying this, a repressed incestuous desire.[2]

The fact that evil spirits attack when the woman breaks the prohibitions (e.g. on seeing a man, or some other animal or plant phallic symbol) may reflect fear of the unconscious

---

[1] For the sexual significance of anointing in general see Ernest Jones (1931, pp. 307-8). Alternatively we may regard the barber's act as that of a paternal figure who, by anointing her, confers fertility on the girl.

[2] Melanie Klein (1932, p. 307) notes that the European girl at puberty frequently exhibits fear that her father may attack and copulate with her in a sadistic way, either because she has had sadistic masturbation phantasies about her mother or because he wishes to get back the penis she has taken from him.

Nayar
Tiyyar

000 sexual jealousy of the natal kinsmen (projected on to spirits, gods, and ancestors) aroused by a woman's marital sexuality. [262] The prohibitions on eating meat and condiments are those stipulated for both men and women in all periods of pollution and also in periods of abstention to obtain ritual purity before worshipping a god. [783] Since these foods are believed to induce sexual desire, this prohibition is equated by informants with abstention from sexual intercourse [834] (also enjoined in all periods of pollution or of enhanced ritual purity) and thus is comparable here to the prohibition on seeing a man or other male sexual symbol and of refraining from marital intercourse.

The practice of a girl's arming herself with a knife or an arrow during menstruation may signify an unconscious desire on the part of women to appropriate and arm themselves with the penis of the prohibited parent, or with any phallic symbol, and thus obviate the dreaded incestuous attack. Since the dread is also unconsciously a desire, this hypothesis is not incompatible with the other, that the knife and arrow are phallic symbols (perhaps paternal) with which the girl, by keeping them beside her, symbolically cohabits in the seclusion period. On the side of men, the planting of an arrow by the girl's brother near the bathing pool after her first menstruation may be a sign of the brother's unconscious desire to copulate with his sister, or to drive away unwanted parental figures (the mother's brother or the father) whose sexual attack the girl both dreads and unconsciously desires. The same incestuous desire on the part of the brother appears in a South Malabar Nayar rite at the first menstruation, where the brother breaks a sheath containing coconut buds with his knife and counts the buds which roll out as an augur of the number of children his sister will bear.

It seems probable that in general the menstruous woman is unconsciously equated by a man with his mother as a forbidden sexual object; hence the fear of approaching her, based on unconscious fear of castration by the father. This view finds support in the beliefs that a man becomes impotent if he copulates with a menstruous woman, and that, by extension, trees and plants wither and die if she urinates or walks upon them. As is well known, the fear of impotence frequently indicates an unconscious fear of being castrated by the father for a sexual approach to the mother. The particular fear of the menstruous woman may lead back to an infantile belief, common in our own society, that parental intercourse is a sadistic attack by the father in which the mother is wounded and bleeds. The fact that the menstruous woman is armed with a knife or an arrow recalls an allied phantasy common among European infants, of the phallic mother who by intercourse has possessed herself of the father's penis and is thus doubly terrifying since, if one approached her, the penis would attack (castrate) oneself. (Klein 1932, pp. 103, 189-90.)

Why is it deemed necessary for a girl to 'menstruate' and be deflowered (both symbolically) before she has attained puberty and is likely to enter into real sex relations? The first part of my hypothesis is that this rite issues out of the marked horror of incest in these castes, which makes it necessary for the natal kinsmen of a woman to renounce the rights in her mature sexuality before she is in fact mature.

184 Among the Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars descent is matrilineal and the *ius in genitricem* of a woman remains with her matrilineage headed by her *kāranavan*. 613 This man is usually her mother's brother and later her own elder brother. In all these castes but particularly among South Malabar Nayars, a woman must implicitly obey these kinsmen, 564 sometimes to the extent of divorcing her husband of whom they are overtly jealous. The horror with which these castes regard incest within the lineage, however, 602 makes the etiquette of behaviour between a woman and older men of her lineage formalized to the point of avoidance. [586] She may not sit before them, speak to them except under necessity, nor be alone with one of them. In the royal lineages a prince should not see his mature younger sisters and maternal nieces except on ceremonial occasions.

Nayar

Tiyyar

This partial avoidance between a woman and her older natal kinsmen begins after the *tāli*-rite, when she receives the title *amma* (lit. 'mother'). In the rite, it seems, the girl is fictitiously made mature by the mock menstrual seclusion – before she is in danger of actually becoming mature; her sexuality is then given away by her natal kinsmen to a vicarious husband outside her lineage. For this is the one right in her forbidden to her natal kinsmen; the rest – her domestic services and procreative power – remain theirs throughout her life. Even among North Malabar Nayars and Tiyyars, with their virilocal residence, the brother may call home his sister and her children and require her to divorce her husband. He must, moreover, maintain her if she is divorced, and her children have the right to return to the mother's brother's house as his heirs. 613 602 588 182 184 ●

The unconscious desire for adelphic incest in these matrilineal castes appears in other rites. I have mentioned the rites performed by the brother of a girl at her first menstruation among South Malabar Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars. Later, when the South Malabar Nayar woman was in the fifth or seventh month of her pregnancy, she was formerly seated before her brother who poured tamarind juice into her mouth from the point of the *taravād*'s ancestral sword. It was believed that he thus conveyed strength (*sakthi*, a generalized form of energy believed to reside *par excellence* in semen) and also martial valour, into the body of the first-born child. This seems a clear instance of the brother's unconscious wish to impregnate his sister himself, as well as an explicit recognition that, in matriliny, the mother's brother has the rights of a *pater* in the child. 182 184 593 613 843 [827] [822]

Among South Malabar Tiyyars the tamarind-juice is given by the pregnant woman's brother to her husband, and by the husband's sister to his wife. This rite is more in keeping with a patrilineal system in which the husband has primary procreative rights in his wife. At the same time, it seems likely that the rite reflects the brother's unconscious desire to pass his 'strength' to his sister and her child, through the husband, and the sister's desire to contribute to the making of the child, and thus usurp the role of her brother's wife. The rite is beautifully in keeping with double unilineal descent, in which brothers and sisters retain strong interest and rights in each others' offspring. [607]

The unconscious fear, and underlying it, an unconscious desire, of women for sexual attack from a male parental figure (the father in this case) probably appears also in the South Malabar Tiyyar rites which precede the tamarind-drinking. These are to drive out evil spirits who may attack the child in the womb. The woman sits at night before a group of washermen (Mannans) who invoke the spirit in song, and perform devil-dancing in weird masks. By morning, the more susceptible of the women present, overcome by the spirit, may go into fits. Finally a live cock is held against the woman's forehead, and rice thrown over her head. If she has a fit, the cock is beheaded and its blood offered to the evil spirit. The rites are paid for by the woman's father. In view of what is known of the beliefs concerning incubi in western societies (Jones 1931, ch. 3), it seems probable that these rites issue from the unconscious female fear of being attacked sexually by the father, and the recognition of the father's unconscious desire to kill the child in his daughter's womb. The Mannan devil-dancers (who sometimes consciously impersonate the dead ancestors of a propitiating Tiyyar lineage) may be interpreted to represent the woman's lineage forbears and thus, collectively, her father.[1] 184 843 789 182 [564] [787] [782]

Again, in all the groups studied the *taravād* is believed to be guarded by a group of snake- 000

---

[1] This interpretation is practically certain in view of the almost identical ceremony carried out one year after the death of a South Malabar Tiyyar. It is believed that before this the spirit is earth-bound and cannot be invoked to pass to heaven. On the night fixed, small girls of the *taravād* sit before Mannan and Panan devil-dancers who, as in the pregnancy ceremonies, wear weird masks and sing to invoke the spirit. Late at night one of the girls may become possessed by it and talk like the deceased, and give commands to the family about its future conduct. After this ceremony the spirit is freed from its bonds to the earth (see Thurston and Rangachari 1909, VII, p. 91). Since the possession of the girls by an ancestral spirit here is of the same kind as in the pregnancy rites and both types of spirit are called *pedham*, there seems little doubt that the evil spirit who attacks is also ancestral and thus an *imar*.

Nayar

613 Again in all the groups studied the

776 taravād is believed to be guarded by a group of snake-

564 gods (*nagas*) who reside in the small grove in the south-east corner of the ancestral gardens. 182 If they are offended, the snakes inflict the *taravād* with barrenness among women, disease, and child-deaths. 184 They are propitiated by the low caste of Pulluvar. A Pulluvar and his wife come to the Nayar or Tiyyar grove and draw figures of the serpents in green, red, yellow, and black. They sing songs of entreaty to the snakes, and play on a musical instrument, while one 782 or more women of the propitiating *taravād*, who have observed sexual continence and food taboos for several days previously, dance round the figures with hair streaming. 787 The snakes then 'enter the bodies' of these women, who behave in a dissociated manner and speak with the voice of the possessing snake-spirit, announcing to *taravād* members the kind of propitiation necessary to overcome their wrath. Since they are the guardians of the *taravād*, are jealous of the marital sexuality of women born into it, can inflict them with barrenness, and periodically 'enter into' them, it seems likely that these totemic snakes are unconsciously regarded as phallic symbols of the *taravād*'s male forbears (whether matrilineal or patrilineal). Their 'possession' of the women would thus reflect the incestuous desires of women towards men of the parental generation in the *taravād*, and secondarily towards their brothers.

593 182 I have discussed in general terms the probable existence of unconscious incestuous desires between the individual and members of the parental generation and, as an extension of this, between siblings. We must now face the problem of whether, in the matrilineal castes, a regular Oedipus complex exists: that is, of whether a man unconsciously wishes to kill his father and appropriate his mother, and whether a girl harbours murderous wishes towards her mother and incestuous ones towards her father.[1]

There seems little doubt that in the matrilineal as in the patrilineal castes, a 'normal' Oedipus complex must develop in early infancy. Even among South Malabar Nayars the physiological function of the male in procreation is clearly acknowledged, and a child is expected to resemble its father as well as its matrilineal kin. The Nayar infant must, more-593 over, be aware of the marital relationship between its parents, since it commonly sleeps in the mother's room until the age of about four or until the next sibling is born. 604 At about the age of five to six, however, a change takes place in the relationship between a South Malabar Nayar child and its parental generation, and thus, we may suppose, in its unconscious attitudes to 182 these figures. A boy now comes under the discipline of his mother's brothers, and a relationship of reverence with underlying hostility begins to be formed. A girl becomes aware that her mother's brothers are her ultimate guardians and, though she may still approach them freely, she must submit to them. The father drops into the background. In a traditional household, whereas he might play with them freely as babies, he may not now interfere in the upbringing of his children. Even today, he may be already divorced and replaced by another husband: in Palakkara sixteen out of seventy Nayar sibling groups containing children under [578] the age of fifteen had no contact with the *genitor* or his kin. The mother's brother thus takes over a great part of the role of *pater*. The relationship admits, however, greater conscious hostility than does the patrilineal father-child relationship. Despite the reverence demanded in public, Nayar men sometimes remark privately that they harbour murderous feeling towards their *kāranavan*: several have in fact killed him. Such conscious hostility to the father would be almost unheard of in a high patrilineal caste. The partial avoidance required between a man and his sister's son, and the extreme formality of their behaviour, reflect this underlying hostility. The relationship with the elder brother is, in etiquette, modelled on that

---

[114] [1] My data, as far as Malabar matriliny is concerned, contradict Malinowski's (1916) theory that the Oedipus complex is absent from the start in matrilineal societies and is replaced by the wish to marry the sister and kill the maternal uncle. They confirm Ernest Jones's (1924) conclusion that a normal Oedipus complex exists in matrilineal as in patrilineal societies, but that in matriliny repressed incestuous desire for the mother is extended to an unusual degree to the sister, and much unconscious hostility to the father deflected towards the mother's brother. Roheim's (1950, ch. 9) refutation of Malinowski's view and his analysis of the Oedipus complex of Normanby Island are also relevant.

Nayar
Tiyyar

593 604 182

with the mother's brother; emotionally, hostility is more repressed and greater loyalty demanded. Both avuncular and fraternal relationships pivot on the bond of men to their mothers and sisters: common devotion to these women places the men in a position of equivalence rather than of unity, emphasizes loyalty to the *taravād* rather than interpersonal amity, and points up the rivalry between them.

[083] [065] [069]

The suppressed hostility of a boy towards his father with reference to the mother becomes, therefore, among South Malabar Nayars transferred to the mother's brother at the age of four to six. The completeness of this tranference appears in death rites. The younger brother or sister's son of a dead man performs his funeral rites, observes pollution for fifteen days, and, if he is the immediate heir, mourning and sexual abstinence for six months to one year. He thenceforth annually offers cooked food to the spirit, which is represented in the form of a terrible and vengeful animal (*predham*, the same word as for the hairy spirits who attack menstruous women). No mourning, pollution, or propitiations were traditionally observed for the *genitor*, about whose spirit no beliefs are held. [083] The observance of pollution (without rites) for the mother's *tāli*-tier was the sole acknowledgment of its fathers' roles in the *taravād*'s perpetuation. The son's unconscious desires remain primarily fixed upon his mother, as appears in his paramount devotion to her in social life and to Bhagavadi in religion. They appear to be secondarily directed to the younger sister and sister's daughter, hence the avoidance and extreme formality demanded in the relationship with them. The rites of first menstruation and pregnancy and the institution of the serpent-gods seem to indicate that unconsciously the mother's brothers and other matrilineal forbears are regarded as *genitores* as well as *patres* and the elder brother as the symbolic spouse of a woman as well as her natural guardian.

593 604 182 184

Among North Malabar Nayars and Tiyyars, with their virilocal residence, the transference of hostile wishes on the part of the male, and incestuous wishes on the part of the female, from the father to the mother's brother, is less completely carried out. The father is often known throughout his life, when he shares with the mother's brother the role of *pater*. Since legal rights are concentrated with him, the relationship to the mother's brother tends to be more hostile, that to the father, more affectionate. But individual circumstances modify these relationships: a man may align himself alternately with mother's brother and with father according to the financial support each offers him. Death-pollution is observed for both and the vengeful spirits of both are propitiated. As in South Malabar, the primary emotional relationship is always with the mother and the secondary one with the sister, to whose claims those of the wife are subordinated. The etiquette of avoidance and restraint towards the sister and sisters' daughters is identical in north and south. A girl regards her father with greater reverence as her natural guardian, but her behaviour is more stereotyped than among South Malabar Nayars and corresponds more closely with that to the mother's brother. Father-daughter incest is regarded with greater horror than in the south, from which we may surmise that unconscious incestuous desires remain stronger. [835]

593 182 184

On the surface, the South Malabar Tiyyar system with its double unilineal descent and emphasis on the unity of the patrilineal extended family forms a contrast to these matrilineal systems. The father or rather, traditionally, the eldest of the fraternal group of fathers, is head of the family. Sons are brought up under the discipline of all their fathers whom they are expected to regard with equal deference and love. A more regular Oedipus complex appears to develop in this caste. From the age of five to six, a boy must observe reverence to his fathers comparable to that of a Nayar boy to his mother's brothers. He addresses them with deference, and avoids them out of respect. Like a Nayar boy, he is dismissed from intimate contact with the mother about this age, as also with the sisters; they in turn, as he grows older, treat him with deference. The unconscious hostility of the son to his fathers appears in beliefs about

Nayar
Tiyyar

184 The unconscious
182 hostility of the son to his fathers appears in beliefs about the spirits of dead *kāranavans* of the patrilineal group, which, like Nayar *kāranavans'* spirits,
593 are predatory and dangerous beasts to be propitiated with fear. Hostility to the father is however in his lifetime more deeply suppressed than to the Nayar mother's brother, as is
775 male sibling rivalry. Among Nayars, an attempt is made to mitigate the divergent interests of married brothers by reducing to a minimum the claims of their wives and children. Their
595 mutual jealousy is also acknowledged in the prohibition against brothers having sex-relation with the same woman. Among Tiyyars unity of marital interests is ensured by obliging brothers to share a wife. This enforced unity of brothers is the most striking feature of the Tiyyar system and that which contrasts most strongly with the matrilineal castes.

182 Also among Tiyyars the father-daughter relationship resembles that of the Nayar to his sister's daughter. After she is five to six, a girl's father sternly disciplines her; with the onset
184 of puberty an etiquette of partial avoidance is imposed. The 'possession' of women by serpent-gods of their natal *taravād*, and the exorcism of demons during pregnancy lead me to suspect
593 that unconscious incestuous wishes towards the father are perpetuated in women as they are towards the mother's brothers (whose images are the serpent gods of the matrilineage) among Nayars and matrilineal Tiyyars.

593 The Tiyyar system is not, however, a 'regular' patrilineal one. We may suspect this from the existence of matrilineal clans. First, the father's power is not absolute: he shares it with
182 his brothers. Second, the harmony between brothers is, as among Nayars, maintained primarily through their dependence on the mother. Among Nayars men neglect their wives and children
613 for the sake of *taravād* and mother. Among Tiyyars they forgo sexual satisfaction for the sake of the mother and domestic harmony: the mother controls the wife's actions and dictates
184 the turns by which her sons may sleep with their common wife. This dependence on the
606 mother is reflected, as among Nayars, in devotion to Bhagavadi.

Third, the Tiyyar system resembles the Nayar in the strength of brother-sister ties. The Tiyyar father early surrenders part of the guardianship of his daughters to his sons.
593 This appears at the *tāli*-rite where the father hands his daughter to the mock-bridegroom,
182 who returns her at the 'divorce' to her brother. The relationship between a mature but unmarried girl and her brother is, as among Nayars, one of discipline, restraint and partial
184 avoidance. After her marriage and departure to the husband's house, the restraint between a Tiyyar woman and her brother is somewhat relaxed. Should she be divorced or widowed, however, she is returned to her brother.

The disciplinary role of the brother is reflected in the relationship to the mother's brother. He is not, as in many patrilineal systems, an intimate with whom joking and licence are permitted. He is rather a potential father-substitute, and may in fact become one if his sister is divorced or widowed. At his death his sisters' children observe pollution as for a patrilineal kinsmen and, after the deceased's sons but before his younger brothers, make offerings to the spirit. In life his claim as a potential father-in-law resembles that of the Nayar or Tiyyar mother's brother in North Malabar.

595 Fraternal polyandry strengthens the claims of maternal kin, as it does the ties between a woman and her natal family. For in the traditional family, with a single common wife, there
182 is only one set of maternal kinsfolk for all the children of brothers. Even if a second wife were taken, sororal polygyny or the sororate might perpetuate this situation. Again, it is clear
593 that with fraternal polyandry many Tiyyar women must have remained unmarried and under the permanent guardianship of their brothers. The uncertain prospect of marriage for a woman gives us a further clue to the meaning of the *tāli*-rite.

588 Having clarified the relationship of women to their natal kinsmen, we can state more clearly the probable unconscious motives for the *tāli*-rite. In all the groups her natal kins-
593 men retained strong though varying rights in a woman throughout her life. In all, the bond
182

Nayar
Tiyyar

between mother and son was the most cherished relationship, while that between brother and 588
sister came second in emotional strength. In all the exogamy of the unilineal group was 593
sternly enjoined, and there was horror of adelphic incest. There was, however, evidently temptation
towards it, since women remained under the partial guardianship of their brothers and 182
might (invariably among South Malabar Nayars, occasionally in the other groups) live in
the same house with them.

It is a commonplace in Hinduism that a woman is never independent: throughout her life 593
she is under the guardianship of one or more men. At her birth all rights in a woman are vested
in the men of her property-group, among Nayars and Tiyyars the *kāranavan* and under him 562
other males of the group, whether matrilineal or patrilineal. These rights include the right to
discipline her and, as she becomes old enough, to command her domestic services; they are 613
counterbalanced by the obligation to feed her and protect her from harm. At puberty two 182
new sets of rights are acquired by whoever is her guardian, in her sexuality and in the children
she may bear. In the matrilineal castes the *ius in genitricem* is retained by the matrilineal kinsmen. 184
Among South Malabar Tiyyars it is given to a group of brothers of another patrilineal
lineage at the post-puberty marriage rite. In all these castes there is, however, uncertainty 588
about the *ius in uxorem*, since the girl is not, as in a patrilineal Tamil caste, given over to the
guardianship of one particular husband for the duration of her life. First, all the castes permit [586]
divorce and reversion to the brothers' house. Second, among Nayars, though a woman might
have several husbands traditionally, she might conceivably have none, if she was divorced
or failed to compete with other women. Among South Malabar Tiyyars, because of fraternal
polyandry, many women must have remained unmarried. The *tāli*-rite, therefore, appears in 588
one aspect as half a marriage, a ceremony made necessary by the strong incest-taboos in these
groups and the uncertain nature of post-puberty marriage. In it the men of her natal group 182
ceremonially give away the sexual rights in a girl. That the bridegroom does not receive
permanent rights in his bride, but forsakes her on the fourth morning, points up the negative
character of this marriage, as a renunciation of rights by the men of one group without the
corresponding acceptance of them by members of another.

In all the groups certain ritual acts emphasize this reluctant renunciation by the woman's 588
natal kinsmen. In the matrilineal castes one of her brothers, or her *kāranavan*, carries each girl 182
into the marriage shed, bears her round, and seats her on the plank. This act is significant
because after the *tāli*-rite a girl may not be touched by mature men of her lineage: taboos 184
associated with incest prohibitions come into force from this date. Among South Malabar
Tiyyars, again, the mother's brother, who after the father has secondary rights of guardianship 613
and who, through matrilineal clan exogamy, is also concerned in the etiquette of incest-taboos,
carries the girl to her seat. In the matrilineal castes, the girl's *kāranavan* asks the [835]
astrologer if the auspicious time has come, and signals for the *tāli* to be tied. Among South
Malabar Tiyyars, as might be expected, the father officiates here. Among South Malabar
Nayars, brothers of the girls first welcome the bridegrooms, wash their feet, and receive gifts
of clothing in return. The underlying sexual hostility of the lineage's men to these necessary
intruders appears on the fourth morning, when boys of the host lineage pelt the bridegrooms
with plantain-fruits (recognized as phallic symbols by Nayars) as they enter the house to eat
the ceremonial meal with their brides. Among Nayars and South Malabar Tiyyars, the
kāranavan's gifts to the bridegrooms when they depart after the 'divorce' signify his gratitude
for their act of ceremonially releasing the procreative powers of his lineage's women, while
at the same time dismissing them.

We note now that the *tāli* is seldom tied by the man with whom the girl will later cohabit as her husband. Among South Malabar Nayars the *enangan* might, after the 'divorce', approach her again as lover. But his status as ritual bridegroom gave him no prior claims: as the girl's

Nayar
Tiyyar

588 *sambandham* lover he came in a different role. Among South Malabar Tiyyars the prospective
182 husband might tie the *tāli*. But in this case, too, his roles were kept separate: the post-puberty
184 marriage rites must be gone through if the bridegroom (with his brothers) became permanently married to the girl. In any case the ritual bridegroom was usually a small boy; this is the important point here. Among North Malabar Tiyyars a potential mother-in-law tied the *tāli*, or else the barber woman, though in this ceremony the barber is protagonist in the rites marking the girl's passage to womanhood. In the higher matrilineal castes, and among North Malabar Tiyyar barbers, the rite is performed by an elder of high rank. Among North Malabar Nayars, however, the lower caste Marar drummers (who, like the barber for Tiyyars, conduct Nayar funeral rites) play a role suspiciously like secondary bridegrooms, since they place ornaments on the girl's arms and address her for the first time as a married woman, before the *tāli* is tied.

588 My hypothesis is that in all these cases the choice of *tāli*-tier indicates, on the part of men of the society, a general, unconscious fear of deflowering women. Barbosa (Stanley tr.
182 1866, p. 7) gives us a clue to this when he says that even after the *tāli*-rite, Nayar mothers went 'begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an
833 unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women'. Castenada (Kerr ed. 1911), similarly reports that in the Zamorin's family the girl's kindred 'send for a young man of the Nayar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin, after which he hangs a jewel round her neck. . . .' Even for the Zamorin's sisters, therefore, the 'initiator' 's role was unpopular: he must be induced with gifts to fulfil it. Hamilton (1727, p. 174) notes that the 'Nambourie or chief priest' must deflower the Zamorin's Nayar mistress (presumably at the *tāli*-rite) before the Zamorin could cohabit with her, and that 'some of the Nobles are so complaisant as to allow the Clergy the same Tribute'. That the Nambūdiris' privilege was not one exacted under protest from the Nayars, but willingly accorded, appears from his remark that 'the common people cannot have that compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the Priest's place themselves'.

182 The unwillingness to deflower a woman is explained on the grounds that it is a 'disgrace' and an 'unclean thing'. Here, evidently, is the clue to why the North Malabar Tiyyar *tāli*
588 was tied by a barber woman, and the rites symbolizing defloration, or perhaps conferring fertility on the woman, performed by a barber man. Tiyyar barbers, like their washermen,
564 pollute Tiyyars and may not ordinarily touch them. Both castes attend at the real first menstruation of a North Malabar Tiyyar girl, where the barber man and barber woman perform
881 ceremonies similar to those of the mock menstrual seclusion before the *tāli*-rite. The Tiyyar washerwoman must at all times supply the girl with a lower cloth (*mattu*, 'change') in which
[842] to bathe on the fourth morning of menstruation. She supplies this cloth also for the bath after the mock seclusion before the *tāli*-rite. At the real puberty-rites, however, it is the headman
[533] of the washerman caste, and not a woman, who hands the clean loin-cloth on the third night
[789] to kinswomen of the girl, after singing a song designed to enhance her fertility.

The role of the washerman as a man associated with the fertility of women appears again in the first menstruation ceremony of South Malabar Nayars. Though the Nayar washer-
564 man washes ordinary cloths for Nayars, the lower caste, Tiyyar washermen (*Mannan*) provides
881 the clean loin-cloth for bathing after menstruation and child-birth. At the Nayar puberty-rites, after the ceremonial bath on the fourth morning, the eldest washerman stands on the
182 verandah and instructs the girl, who sits before him within the house, to make an offering with rice and coconuts to the sacred household lamp. While the natal kinsmen of the girl
842 hide themselves on the back verandah (a place usually occupied by women) a group of washer-
[782] men assemble on the front verandah and sing vulgar songs relating to sexual intercourse before the girl and her kinswomen, with a view to enhancing her fertility. At the end, her mother
[533] pays the head washerman the cloth which the girl has worn to cover her head and face.

Nayar
Tiyyar

588 rank, above the political system of the kingdom, and, in religious belief, the representatives
182 of God on earth. All of these father-figures are collectively physiological fathers of the Nayars,
564 so that in summoning them to deflower their women the Nayars call in real or classificatory
fathers as well. When the bridegroom is a higher caste man, moreover (as when Tiyyar barbers
call an elder of their caste), his venerable age leaves no doubt of his paternal role.

That the ritual bridegroom should be a father-figure to the community explains my
informants' memory that the Asan might deflower Nayar women, but might prefer to forgo
his right for money paid by some other bridegroom. It explains why the *desavari* must be present
to give permission for the Nayar rite (and the Tandan for the Tiyyar rite) and receive
money 'as if to recompense him'. The preliminary gifts by the high-caste Nayar girl's family
to Nambûdiri landlords, the *nâduvari* and the Maharaja also bear out this hypothesis.

588 Among South Malabar retainer-Nayars and among Tiyyars a high-caste father-surro-
gate could not be obtained, so that 'they must perforce supply the priest's place themselves'.
184 The retainer-Nayars get round this by selecting an *enangan* to represent the whole caste,
who was deputed for the task by village elders and, supernaturally, by the position of the
182 stars at his birth. Even so, the hazardous nature of the rite is indicated by the need to perform
787 it at an auspicious time, when the astrologer (in some respects another father-figure since,
though of lower caste, he was traditionally the trainer of Nayar boys in their village gym-
nasium, and a priest of Bhagavadi) gave the word.

588 Among North Malabar Tiyyars the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister might
tie the *tâli*. She does this on behalf of her son, who is the proper husband for the girl, and before
604 the marriage-pole and the sacred household lamp (divine phallic symbols). In this caste
184 it is fitting that some kinsman or kinswoman of the bridegroom should perform the rite, because
Tiyyars are not polyandrous and a girl becomes temporarily incorporated at marriage into
182 her husband's dwelling group. Yet, if we assume the Oedipal fear, the Tiyyar bridegroom
could not tie the *tâli* himself, since he is (ideally and often) a cross-cousin. If he is the mother's
brother's son, he takes the girl, in this group where paternal claims offset matrilineal, from
her *kâranavan* and his own father, a terrifying situation in view of his unconscious Oedipal fears.
If he is the father's nephew, he takes her from her father and his own *kâranavan*, an equally
dangerous situation. The problem is surmounted by permitting the mother's brother's wife
or the father's sister of the girl to 'marry' her on behalf of her son.

564 The substitution of the barber-woman to tie the *tâli*, and the role of the barber as one
intimately associated with the girl's passage to womanhood, may perhaps be understood
[588] by considering the general role of barbers in Tiyyar social life. The barbers cut hair for
[305] Tiyyars, and in South Malabar though not commonly in the north, their women are mid-
wives. They rank parallel to the Tiyyar washerman with whom they are compared, since
[759] both castes have polluting occupations but take part in the rites of birth, girls' puberty, and
death. In North Malabar Tiyyar men may marry barber women hypergamously, their
[582] children being barbers by matrilineal descent. Barbers are thus socially and sometimes
physiologically the 'sons' of Tiyyars. They are also likened by the Tiyyars to their younger
brothers. Barbers may not give food to Tiyyars but must attend Tiyyar feasts, when they
sit on the left or 'younger' side of the feasting hall, the Tiyyars sitting on the right or 'older'
[693] side. Barbers address Tiyyar men as 'elder brother', but Tiyyars address older barber men by
name, as they do juniors of their own caste. Despite his low rank, however, the barber is in
[584] some situations a paternal figure for Tiyyars. He assists the Tandan in his executive functions
and may summon Tiyyar offenders to caste justice. An elderly barber is often a marriage-
[793] broker for Tiyyars, but he is primarily a priest for Tiyyar household rites. At a Tiyyar death
he instructs the heirs to make offerings to the spirit, in the form of a mud image which he
[782] makes. On the fourteenth day, he purifies the household by anointing its members with oil
[783]

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949) 1955
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar
Tiyyar
588
184
613

CHART I. *Variations in Essential Features of the Tali-Rite in Four Groups*

Essential Features of the Ceremony	*South Malabar and Cochin Nayars*	*North Malabar Nayars*	*North Malabar Tiyyars*	*South Malabar and Cochin Tiyyars*
Basic economic and residential group in the Kinship System	Matrilineal lineage segment, uxorilocal	Matrilineal lineage segment with virilocal residence	Matrilineal lineage segment with virilocal residence; or patrilineal or ambilineal group	Patrilineal, patrilocal extended family
Descent and inheritance systems	Exclusively matrilineal	Matrilineal with strong paternal rights and obligations	Matrilineal with strong paternal rights and obligations	Double unilineal descent; patrilineal inheritance
Age of girl at *tāli*-rite	Pre-puberty	Pre-puberty	Pre-puberty	Pre-puberty
Place of ceremony	Matrilineal lineage's ancestral house	Matrilineal lineage's ancestral house	Matrilineal lineage's ancestral house or father's own house	Patrilineal group's ancestral house
Expenses of ceremony met by	Matrilineal lineage as a whole	Matrilineal lineage as a whole with help from fathers	Senior MB and father jointly	Father with help from senior MB
Preliminary mock menstrual seclusion	Yes	Uncertain	Yes	Yes
Girl ceremonially 'given away' by	Brother or head of matrilineal group	Brother or head of matrilineal group	MB, MBW, or father	Father; secondarily, MB
Tāli tied by	*Enangen*, district chief, or elderly Nambūdiri Brahman	Elderly Nambūdiri Brahman	MBW, FSi, prospective mother-in-law, or barber woman (Barbers – elderly man)	Young boy, sometimes prospective husband
Supplementary 'fertility' or 'defloration' rites performed by	Nambūdiri Brahman priest or village military leader	Marar (lower caste of funeral priests)	Barber	Village headman's wife
Subsequent seclusion of girl	Couple secluded as for cohabitation	Couple secluded as for cohabitation	Uncertain	Girl secluded with 'bridegroom' or with bridegroom's loincloth

vocal music, etc., goes on. One by one the guests soon depart, and the bridegroom 585
stays in his wife's house for a few days. It must be remembered that the Nāyars [597]
are a strictly matrilocal community, though the custom shows a laxity in these days. [178]

The *Sambandham* customs are not the same all over Malabar. They vary [184]
considerably in details, but the principle is the same all over. *Sambandham* in
itself, though recognised as legal, has not the binding effect of a proper marriage. [581]
It is in theory dissoluble at will, and often it happens that, due either to misunder- 586
standing or quarrel, either of the parties breaks off relations. In such a case, the
marriage is deemed to have ended, and the aggrieved party can, without further
formality, marry anybody else. The legal position is slightly altered in Travancore. [648]
By the Nāyar Regulation Act of 1912 it was enacted that if a man wants to break off his marriage relations with a woman to whom he was united by a properly conducted *Sambandham* he has to give her six months' notice and provide for the maintenance of her children by him (till they attain their twelfth year, unless the mother marries in the meantime). But this law has very little influence, and
marriages and divorces go on in the same free fashion as before. In British Malabar, 581
there is the Malabar Marriage Act of Sir C. Sankaran Nayar, the present Educational
Member of the Imperial Government, by which a Nāyar entering into a *Sambandham* [648]
with a Nāyar woman can, if the parties choose to do so, register their union as a marriage to which ordinary marriage laws apply. This has been found very ineffective, for in the last twenty years during which it has been in force only six marriages have been registered, and all of them have been in the family of its distinguished author.

Before such laws came to be enacted (and to a very great extent even now) 582
there has been singular freedom of marriage and divorce among the Nāyars. The men that a girl could possibly marry were strictly restricted by certain conditions.
A Nāyar girl is not allowed to contract a marriage with men of a lower subcaste. [564]
She can marry either in her own subcaste or in castes above hers. She is not allowed to marry one who is not at least two years older than herself. She cannot marry anyone who shares pollution with her (that is descended from the same ancestress on the maternal side, however remote). There are cases when the common ancestress lived nearly four hundred years ago, but still her descendants are supposed to be so closely related in blood as to preclude matrimonial relationship of any sort.

The husband visits the wife's house after dinner, and this does not cause any 591
particular inconvenience, as, till lately, marriage was restricted to people of one's [582]
own village or of its immediate neighbourhood. But in these days the tendency is [178]
strongly patrilocal, though ancient and aristocratic families still refuse to send their ladies out of the house. To keep within one's own house is considered to be a specially aristocratic privilege.

The question of polyandry among the Nāyars is a much debated point. This 595
can be said with certainty: there has been no authenticated case of it at least for
The last fifty years.

This is mostly due to two reasons: 434
First of all, there is the joint family system which provides for all the members [182]
without distinction. Secondly, every Nāyar family lives on its own plot of ground [245]
on which coco-nut palms are grown, which bring in a small but quite comfortable
sum.

The standard of life is comparatively high. Among the richer classes it is 511
fairly decent, even according to the higher material standards of Europe, while,
among the poorer clases, it never comes anywhere near the uncleanliness, the misery,
the unrefined and uncultured barbarism which is the atmosphere of the slum life of the
big cities of Europe. Poverty is less disreputable than in civilised communities,
and the difference this makes is immense. The peculiarly civilised idea that success
is the criterion of intrinsic merit, and that, consequently, failure by itself proves
that it was deserved, is almost totally unheard of among the Nāyars. The fact that [613]
the individual members of a family have to pool their abilities and, to some extent, [182]
their personal incomes, prevents the sharp distinction between the rich and the poor
which is so characteristic of societies organised on an individual basis.

Food.—The Nāyars are not vegetarians. Like all Hindus, they do not eat 262
beef, but nothing else is prohibited. Fish is a favourite article of food, and there is
an old couplet which sings:

> " *Katal vizhakkā Kari yuntoru vaka*
> *Bhata Bhojana matu Kootāltillā.*" [539]
>
> " Then there is a kind of banana of the seas (fish)
> And the Nāyars cannot live without it."

There is another couplet, which says:

> " There is nothing among the various kinds of food which equals the flesh of a boar."

The Nāyars are great epicures and they cook beautifully. Rice, of course, is the staple food, but milk curds, butter and *ghee* are things of equal importance.

Most Nāyar families have three meals a day. The breakfast, among the poor 264
people, consists of rice boiled with water in the form of a pudding. With it is taken 262
as relishes pickles, fried fish, cooked vegetables, etc. The next meal is at noon. The
main course, of course, is rice. The first part of it is eaten with butter, boiled peas,
and many other relishes. The second course is fish, vegetables, etc., mixed with rice.
The third part is eaten with buttermilk, mangoes, and pickles. The supper at night
is also a meal of which rice is the chief part. The thing about it is that, though the
main course is the same as porridge among the Scotch, the variety, as well as the
taste, of the subsidiary dishes is what makes all the difference.

Clothing.—The typical Nāyar (male) clothing is the *Mundu*. This is generally 291
2¼ yards long, 1¼ yards broad, cloth of fine texture made at Eraniyal, in South 184
Travancore. Nowadays, people wear cotton cloth from Lancashire, while the [439]
richer classes go in for Benares silk.

291 184 richer classes go in for Benares silk. This is wound round the loins and extends to the feet. The upper part of the body is seldom covered by the commoner folk, though most of them carry a second piece of cloth with them. Among the titled classes of the Nāyars it is customary to put on a long piece of laced muslin on the upper part of their body.

Mostly the Nāyars go barefoot, though expensive and elaborately-made sandals are used by the richer classes.

824 302 *Scents, Flowers, etc.*—The Nāyars use a lot of scented things. Sandal-wood paste, which has a beautiful aroma, is generally used on various parts of the body. Musk is also used, generally by ladies. Jasmine is the favourite flower. It is worn in clusters by women in their hair. It is very difficult to find an old Nāyar house which has not got a jasmine plant in its garden. Its scent is delightful, and when strung together as a garland it makes the most delightful, as well as the most welcome, present to a lady. Jasmine is also strewn in the bridal bed.

415 412 326 *Household Utensils.*—Household utensils, plates, pots, etc., are mostly made of bronze. Very few Nāyar families have got what is spoken of as household silver. The material they use is generally made with great taste, but the praise for this does not belong to them. The workers in bronze are hereditary craftsmen. Their life is devoted to designing and making these things, and naturally they have acquired great efficiency in it. The only praise that the Nāyars deserve for using them lies in the fact that, in spite of a strong temptation to go in for aluminium ware, which is much cheaper, they persist in using the costly, but better made and more artistic bronze things.

121 178 What is the future of this people? Will they become patrilineal and merge into the vast ocean of Hindu population, or will they remain matrilineal, while adjusting their social relationships and economic organisations to suit the changing conditions of life in India? Will they break up their *Tharawad* (the joint family) and abandon the primitive system of classificatory relationship? These are questions difficult to answer, but some new tendencies may here be noticed.

178 611 One thing I must say to start with. There is no chance of the system of matriliny undergoing any fundamental change in Malabar. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, the economic interest is too large to submit to any change in the order of things dictated by purely theoretical reasons. Even if we could establish that the patrilineal system of life is superior to the matrilineal, the change from the latter to the former would not take place in Malabar, because it would mean a social revolution of some magnitude. Secondly, as long as there is the Brahmin marriage system it is not only the Nāyars that are interested in its upkeep, but also the Nampudiris.

178 564 Another reason is this. There is in Malabar what may be called a strong caste war. There is first of all the Nampudiri class, mostly landlords with great social and religious influence. Their rivalry is not of great importance. There are, then, the Nāyars. Thirdly, we have the Syrian Christians, who are an extremely intelli-

177
342 recently were thatched are now being tiled with tiles of
European pattern manufactured either locally or in Mangalore.
342 In these days of comparative peace and security of life and
178 property from marauders and free-booters, the necessity for
massive structures has ceased to exist, and, coupled with this,
the improved notions of architecture, derived from an easy
intercourse with more civilised centres, the rapid progress of
education, and with it a better knowledge of, and regard for,
sanitation and hygiene, have wrought remarkable changes in
the construction of buildings, so that a better class of houses,
well built, airy, and commodious, is displacing the old ones
with their small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms.

351 As part of the surroundings of the dwellings in the same
[343] compound, there are frequently seen a cattle shed, an excavated
tank for bathing purposes, often full of fish and water lilies, a
[312] well so arranged as to admit of water being drawn directly from
[515] it to the kitchen. an out-house *(matam)* for the Brahman
travellers or visitors, and, lastly, a small edifice for the family
[574] deity. The gardens surrounding the houses are adorned with
[343] mango and jack trees, immense bananas, groves of cocoanut
[245] and areca palms and various kinds of flowers. Thus, in most
places, their houses, which are occupied by fine types of
humanity, (well made men and shapely women), are situated
beneath the grateful shade of magnificent avenues of trees.

356 Four hundred years ago, a Portuguese traveller, writing
[175] on the subject, remarks* upon the Nayar houses as being scrupulously
clean and neat. Without any exaggeration it may
be said that they are proverbially so, and the women are either
naturally endowed with a taste, or are trained from early childhood,
352 to keep the houses and everything therein neat and clean.
[556] Those of the richer and middle classes are in these days furnished
[177] with articles of European manufacture, and all their
domestic utensils, for daily use, are made either of bell-metal,
copper or brass, all well cleaned and washed early every morning.

415 The furniture of the poorer classes is very simple; a metal
352 pot with a spout, a few metal plates and saucers, a few metal
412 pans of different sizes, a spitoon of brass, a few mats, a knife,
184 a cot or two, a betel box, and a few wooden bins for grains, are
nearly all the requirements of a household in this respect.

342 The house itself is called by several names according to
564 the occupant's caste, that of an ordinary Nayar being a *veedu*

by the Kaniyán or local astrologer, to the bridegroom who 588 [431]
with the sword on his lap ties it round the neck of the girl. [787]
She is then required to hold an arrow and a looking glass. [326]
When several girls have to undergo the ceremony, a single Thirumulpád performs it or as many Thirumulpads as there are girls. The Thirumulpad gets one to eight rupees for [465]
each girl. As soon as the *táli* tying is over, certain formalities indicative of the wife's duties (giving the bridegroom betel to chew, giving him a vessel of water to wash his feet and some fruits to eat, etc.), are gone through, and after this, the *táli* tier is allowed to depart receiving his fee for the service rendered by him. The account given 184 ●
above is that of the ceremony performed in the aristocra- 588
tic families of the State. Among the Nayars in the northern parts of the State as well as in other places, the Kaniyan or the [787]
village astrologer examines the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls and those of the boys of the families of their *enangans*, selects the boy or boys fit to tie the *táli* and determines the auspicious hour, when information is also given to the *káranavan* of the boy's families regarding the proposal and a formal request to them to allow the boys to serve as bridegrooms. In the event of their willingness, preparation for the ceremony begins at once. The rites and the order in which they are performed differ in different places, and in different subdivisions of the same caste, but the general characteristics are the same throughout. In well-to-do families there is a *táli* [556]
tier for each girl, while in others, a young man is invited to tie the conjugal collar for one girl, and for others, the mother does it. The beating of drums, firing of pop-guns, the procession with elephant, and the worship of the Sun by the girl on a raised platform are all dispensed with. The other formalities except the *Bráhmani's* song in some places are the same as those described above. Added to the jollity of the occasion are the vociferous and joyous shouting of the parties of men arranged for the purpose, as also a peculiar sound produced by the women assembled there.

The married couple are taken inside the house, and the 588
ceremony is practically over. The *Karayinmél Asán*, the head- 622
man of the village, plays an important part in the ceremony. In a conspicuous part of the pandal he is provided with a seat on a cot, on which are spread, a grass mat, a black blanket and

the wedding dress is torn and given to the *Chithayan* which 588
signifies the dissolution of marriage. In some places this takes [586]
place on the morning of the fifth day, and instead of this cere- [465]
money the *táli* tier is given a fee of eight annas and is dismissed
with some presents, and in others the cloth is severed into two [431]
parts and each part given to the bridegroom and the bride
separately in the presence of *enangans* and other friends.
Throughout South Malabar, the severing of the cloth on the [184]
fourth day is indispensable and is part of the ceremony, while,
in this State, it is said that the custom is not now in vogue.
The marriage badge is not removed soon after the divorce, but
is worn by the girl till the twenty-eighth day. Some remove
it on the fourth or the fifth day, while others wear it for a week.

In poor families, where this ceremony cannot be performed 588
on a large scale, the girls are taken to the nearest temple, 735
and the *táli* is tied by the mother with neither feasting nor 184
merriment. In some cases very poor people take their
girls before the deity in the *Trikkákkarappan* temple and tie
the *táli*, and very often do such people perform the ceremony
on the *Onam* day in front of the clay image (*Mahádévar*)
placed in their court-yard.

Where the Thirumulpád is the *táli* tier, he goes through the 588
ceremony for a number of girls, and on receipt of the fee
for his service to each girl, he departs in peace. If the *táli*
tier, whether a Kshatriya or a young man of the *enangu*,
wishes to take her as his wife, he is at liberty to do so
with the consent of her parents; and in that case he has to
celebrate the *sambandham* by giving her presents of cloth.

In South Malabar and the Cochin State, the general 588
belief among the Nayars is, that the bridegroom has a right to 184
marry her if he wills, and the severing of the cloth shows [586]
the dissolution of the marriage tie, which gives her the liberty
to choose anybody else as her husband. It is also understood [833]
that, with the tying of the *táli*, the virginity ceases, and he who
brings or takes her to that stage has a right to cohabit with
her, which he relinquishes on the fourth day of the *Tálikettu
kalyánam*. Further, the woman observes a sort of pollution [765]
for fifteen days for the death of the man who tied the [783]
tali, which proves that he is her husband. In some parts she
merely bathes, and even this has been of late given up.

The following is given to be the explanation of the cere- 588
monial:—There is very little difference between the *Tálikettu* 171

881 she bathes with her friends. The same party return home in procession, when the *Bráhmani* entertains the party with her music. In the afternoon, the girl is seated in a pandal put up in front of the house, where the Vélans continue the songs, which are *Puranic*, and the assembled guests who are chiefly the women of the village as also those of their friends and relatives present the washerman, each with a piece of cloth. They are entertained at a sumptuous feast held that day; after which the assembled party break up, taking leave of the host. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house on the fourth day for the bath; whence she returns to her house in procession together with the beating of drum and joyous shouts. [184] In the northern parts of the State, the Vélan's songs are at night, and the performance of the ceremony is compulsory on the fourth day. In the southern Taluks it is often put off to a convenient day, before the completion of which, the girl is prohibited from entering into the kitchen or going to the temple for worship.

Sambandham.

585 The second or real marriage is the *Sambandham* (the customary union of man and woman), which is the principal word denoting the conjugal relations among the Nayars. It is said that there are seven forms of this marriage prevailing in Malabar, of which only [184] [582] two or three are in vogue in the State. The customs connected with each of the latter differ in different places: nevertheless the main features are the same all over. The best form of *Sambandham* among the Nayars is that between the daughter of a maternal uncle and his nephew; but, as a rule [584] [787] they enjoy very much greater freedom of choice than other classes of people. The parents or friends of the bride or bridegroom make the proposal, and the wishes of the *káranavans* of the two families are invariably consulted after the examination and agreement of their horoscopes. If the parties agree, an auspicious day is fixed in consultation with the astrologer. A few of the caste-men of the village and the friends of the bridegroom meet together in his house, and they all go in a sort of procession to the bride's house where they are properly welcomed and seated in a conspicuous part of the house. A portion of the *Rámáyanam* or other sacred book, referring to [583] [574] marriage and the happy conjugal life attending it, is then read by the Asán or village school master. Some music is also provided for the entertainment of the assembled guests who

are treated to a sumptuous dinner, and at the auspicious hour the 585 [533]
bridegroom and his party proceed to a conspicuous part of the [574]
house, where a seat is specially provided for him. On either side
of the seat and a little in front of it, are placed two lighted lamps.
There the bridegroom and the bride make obeisance to the [576]
káranavans and other elderly men present there, distribute
presents of money to the Brahmans who pronounce their benediction
upon the conjugal pair. The bridegroom or his [184] ●
káranavans in the northern parts of the State give her the
wedding dress in which she is dressed. The bride is then
ushered in, either by her mother or by an elderly member of
the family when cloths are given to the bride by the bridegroom.
In some places the bridegroom and his party chew
betel leaf and nut, while they chat with the women. After a
while, the party begins to break up, one by one, wishing the
couple all happiness, and the women, departing one by one,
leaving the couple alone, one of them closing the door from
outside. About daybreak, next morning, the bridegroom departs
from the house, leaving under the pillow a sum of money
according to his means. The *sambandham* is now complete.
The woman resides in her family, and her husband [591]
visits her there. A few days after this, the bridegroom's mother [431]
or some senior woman of his family sends some cloths including
pávu mundus (superior cloths) and *thórtha mundus* (towels)
and also some gingelly oil for her use during the next six
months. Every six months, she does the same, and on the
festivals of *Onam*, *Vishu* and *Thiruváthira* she is given a little
money, arecanut, betel, tobacco and banana. Before long 585
the women of the bridegroom's family express their wish to 602
see her, and have her brought to their family by a few women
of the former. She stays there for a few days and is sent [431]
back to her own house with presents of ornaments and clothes
from senior women of the house. After this she is at liberty to
visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious.

In the Chittur and Talapilly Taluks of the State as also 585
in the Palghat Taluk of South Malabar, this form of marriage 184
is called *Ḳidakkóra* or *Kidakka kalyánam* (the bed chamber [635]
ceremony). As part of this ceremony, a declaration is made
by one of the bridegroom's party to the senior female of the
bride's house in the presence of the assembled guests in the
following terms:— " Let this youth visit this damsel for

585
184 six months," and a reply is given in the terms "Be it so". Thus, the permission of the senior lady of the bride's family is asked and given to the bridegroom to visit the bride for a period of six months.

[556] The young men of some aristocratic families who wish to perform *sambandham* have the brides brought to them on an auspicious day without any formal ceremony, and henceforth look upon them as their wives.

585 The union is generally effected with the mutual consent, [586] but is terminable at the will of either party. Practically, a [581] marriage thus effected is, in the majority of instances, found as happy and enduring as others more formal and ceremonial.

The following is the account given by the late Mr. Chandu Menon of the ceremonies constituting the marriage among the Nayars of Malabar. It is quoted here, because it is a typical description which covers all forms of the union :—

585 "*Sambandham* is the principal Malayalam word as *viváham* 192 is in Sanskrit. Whatever may be the *sambandhams* of the 197 *marumakkatháyam* Nayars, there can be no doubt that the idea which the word conveys to a Malayali is the same as the word *viváham*. The generic term, *sambandham*, which, in South Malabar between Calicut and Nedunganad, and in Ponnani, Cochin, and parts of Travancore, is the old name to denote marriage includes—

1. *Guna dósham* as used in South and North Malabar.
2. *Pudamuri* or its Sanskrit synonym for *Vastradánam* used in South Malabar.
3. *Uzhamporukkuka*, and *Vidáram Kairuga* of North Malabar.
4. The *Kidakkóra kalyánam* of Palghat and parts of Nedunganád.

Pudamuri, Vastradánam, Uzhamporukkuka, Vidáram Kiaruga are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would hardly be a Malayali who would not really understand what is meant by *sambandham thudanguka* (to begin *sambandham*). The meaning of this phrase which means "to marry" is understood throughout the Keralam in the same way, and there cannot be any ambiguity about it.

585
184 It is thus found, that *sambandham* is the principal word denoting marriage among the *marumakkatháyam* Nayars. It

will also be found on a close and careful examination of facts, 585 that the principal features of this *sambandham* ceremony all 184 over Keralam, are, in the main, the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the [787] examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether the stars agree astrologically, the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony, the usual hours at which the ceremony takes place, the presentation of the *dánam* (gifts) to the Brahmans, the sumptuous banquet, the meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are the features which will invariably be found in all well conducted *sambandhams* in all parts of Kéralam alike. But here I would beg to state, that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to are gone through at all *sambandhams* among respectable Nayars, and I would further say, that they ought to be gone through at every *sambandham*, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of *sambandham*, with the particular incident attached to certain forms of *sambandham* in South Malabar. I shall describe the *Pudamuri* or *Vastradánam* as celebrated in North Malabar, and show how the other forms of *sambandham* are related to it. I consider the *Pudamuri* form the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. The preliminary ceremony in every *Pudamuri* is 585 the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom 184 by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride 787 in the presence of the relations of the bride and the bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down the results of his calculation on a piece of palmyra leaf with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's *káranavan* and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the bride- [574] groom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the [431] former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth, and this preliminary ceremony is invariably performed

184 [787] at all *Pudamuris* in North Malabar. It is called *Pudamuri Kodukkal* (giving pieces of cloth for dressing), and it is unknown in South Malabar.

Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the *Pudamuri*, the bridegroom visits his *káranavans* and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nut, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset, to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house of the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends, to seats [431] provided in the *tekkini* or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom distributes presents (*dánams*) or money gifts to the Brahmans assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now the time for the [787] astrologer to appear and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the *patinjáttu* or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the house in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated and turned into a bed room for the occasion. [354] There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps and *ashtamangalyam* which consists of eight articles symbolical of *mangalyam* or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, lighted fire and a small round wooden box called a *cheppu* made in a peculiar fashion. They will be found placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his best man enters the room through the western door accompanied by the bride's aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east with the *ashtamangalyam* and lits up lamps, and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom are touched, and the bridegroom immediately leaves the room, as he has to [431] perform another duty. At the *tekkini* or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes and betel leaves and

585

nuts, which are also given to all the persons assembled at the 184 place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom re- [431] tires to the bed room with the bride.

This is an unvarnished account of a *Pudamuri*. Next morning *veetil kettu* or *salkàram* ceremony follows, and the relations of the bridegroom take the bride to the husband's house, where the bride's party are treated to a grand feast ".[1]

The orthodox view of this form of marriage.

The *sambandham* or *Pudamuri* ceremony is not a mar- 585 riage in the legal or sacramental sense of the 564 term. The views of the members of the 184 orthodox community in Malabar, who are the expounders of the existing customs, are of great ethnographic importance. It is said that the Nambuthiris consort with Nayar females by *sambandham*, and precisely the same ceremony is gone through whether the husband is a Nambuthiri or a Nayar. The Nambuthiris do not look upon it as a marriage. Where a Brahman is a bridegroom, he cannot eat with his Sudra wife, and is therefore unable to join with his wife in the wedding feast. There is no comparison of horoscopes. The [831] aristocracy of the District of Malabar, the Rajas who are admittedly the heads of the Nayar caste, and the Nambuthiris who are the expounders of religion, opine, that chastity is not one of the duties prescribed for the Nayar community and *slokas* (verses) are quoted to prove this. This view is not held in the Cochin State.

In the Malabar Marriage Commission, one hundred and 586 ninety-seven witnesses admitted the undoubted fact that either party to the union may terminate it at any time from wantonness, caprice or any other reason, and that if the couple joined together by *Pudamuri* were satisfied with one night of hymeneal bliss, there is no legal impediment to prevent their separating without any formality on the following morning. Ninety-one witnesses alleged some formality to be necessary, and that parties should not separate without the approval of their *kàranavans* or of their relatives or of their caste people. There was also a small minority (twenty-one witnesses) who [562] denied to the women the right of divorce which they accorded to man, assigning as their reason, that, under the Hindu Law, no woman can be independent. This minority would deprive

---

[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, pages 35-37.

595
564 responsibility to support their wives and children from their
[184] family property. Whether it was introduced by the Nambuthiris,
it is difficult to believe; and it is to be noted, that it was prevailing
to a considerable extent in North Malabar, among whom
and other low castes their influence was less than in South
Malabar and the Cochin State.

83 The *Smriti*[1] says, "the Sudras' appointed path to Heaven
564 is serving the Brahmans". "The practice of Brahmans,
Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, having sexual intercourse with the
servile women is in accordance with the *sástrás*. If a Brahman
wish to have sexual intercourse with a Sudra wife, the Sudra is
bound to gratify the wish. A Sudra cannot be sure of the true
parentage of his children". Again, before the Malabar Marriage
Commission, the Zamorin Maharaja Bahadur, Ettan Thampuran
Avergal, a learned Sanskrit scholar, Kolattúr Váriar and
other respectable witnesses unanimously deposed, that, in Kerala,
a non-Brahman or *marumakkatháyam* woman need not be
chaste, and she is not forbidden to consort with more than one
man. To such teachings of the learned and influential leaders
[178] of the orthodox community, the Nayars of these days will no
longer submit.

595 Another important theory connects the practice with the
701 military organisation of the Nayar community. Montaigue was
evidently of opinion, that it was introduced, because the Nayar
leaders looked upon an army of bachelors as the most
effective instrument in war.[2] The subjection of the males of
[833] a whole race from the earliest youth to the decline of manhood
must therefore have been the cause of the fugitive connection
and promiscuous intercourse.

174 European writers, such as Baron Avebury, Meyr, Mc. Linan,
and others, have arrived at the conclusion, that the system of
595 inheritance now prevalent among the Nayars must have originated
from a type of polyandry resembling free love. In
[591] ancient times, the rule was that the wife should remain in
[592] her own house and be visited by her husband, and that the
eldest female was at the head of the house, which was afterwards
transferred to the eldest male. The part of man in the
[842] function of generation passed as of secondary importance or as

---

[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 17.

[2] Essays of Michael Montaigne,

595 [554] circumstances of his matrimonial life. If however he do so, his family and society will not recognise it as such, and no woman of any respectability will enter into such an alliance.

Duration of conjugal union.

586 According to the customary rules of *sambandham*, the relationship between husband and wife, ceases at the will and pleasure of either party; but in practice, such dissolution of marriage is of rare occurrence. The woman generally does not leave her husband, while the man may send her away [613] whenever he chooses to do so. Marriage can be dissolved only with the consent of the *kâranavans* or the other elders of the family. There are certain formalities to be observed in this connection, which vary in detail in different places, but some secret act indicating the intention of repudiation seems necessary before the divorce. In the event of the husband trying to effect a separation from his wife, he sends two or three respectable men to give intimation to the *kâranavan* of the wife's family setting forth his reason for so doing. If the wife wishes to terminate the *sambandham*, she brings it to the notice of the *kâranavan*, and with his consent tells the husband in the presence of her relatives the reasons for discarding [184] him. In the northern parts of the State, especially in the Chittur Taluk, the prevailing custom is to send for the husband and two of the fellow caste-men and to declare the reluctance of the woman to continue as wife, in the presence of these men. In some cases, instead of the formal declaration of the dissolution of marriage, certain conduct on the part of the parties is tantamount to such a declaration, such, for instance, as the failure by the husband or his family to send the usual presents to the family of the wife for *Onam*, *Vishu* and *Thiruvathira*, the refusal of the wife's people to accept them when sent, the failure to pay for wife's sustenance attended with deliberate omission to visit her, the deliberate absence for three consecutive nights with the consent of the elders from her husband's room. As a rule, no dissolution is allowed unless the cases for the same are enquired into and discussed by guardians and relations. Though a woman 626 is free to marry and to dissolve the union, yet, as a rule, she never does so. The fear of social disgrace and self interest [184] stand in the way of a woman's attempt to separate from her [582] husband. In Cochin as well as in South Malabar, the women

are allowed greater freedom in the choice as well as in the 184 582
divorce of husbands (*sambandhakárans*), and the females in the
family do not interfere in their freedom so long as it does not 586
produce any domestic scandal. The orthodox view is that, as the
woman is not independent, she seldom thinks of relinquishing [684]
the husband. Arbitrary divorce is thus discouraged, and adultery
is a grave social offence. A wife, who is disputatious, [689]
who steals her husband's property, who favours another than
her husband, who converses with strangers, who is gluttonous, 586
who enters strange houses, should be put away even though
she may have born ten sons. Litigation between two families [578]
and disagreement between a husband and wife are also the causes. [684]
Social stigma follows the adulterer, and the adulteress loses her [626]
status in society.

Pulikudi.

A Nayar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during 843
her first pregnancy. First during and after
the seventh month of pregnancy, she bathes
and worships the deity in the temple every morning, and eats
before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter, over which
holy *mantrams* have been recited by the temple priest or by
Nambuthiris. This is done generally till delivery. *Pulikudi*
(tamarind juice drinking) is an indispensable ceremony performed
for every pregnant woman, by the rich and poor alike,
on an auspicious day, in the ninth month of pregnancy.
An auspicious day, nay, even the very hour, is fixed by the [787]
astrologer. The ceremony opens by the planting of a twig of [824]
the *ambázha* tree (Spondias mangifera) on the morning of the
day of the ceremony in the inner court-yard (*nadumittam*) or
the northern wing of the house. At the appointed hour
(*muhúrtam*), the pregnant woman, after having been bathed
and properly attired, is conducted to the northern block
of the house (*vatikkini*) where she is seated facing eastwards.
The *Ammáyi* or the uncle's wife, whose presence [604]
on the occasion is essential, goes to the court-yard, and
plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few
drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the
brother, or uncle, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is neces- [301]
sary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right hand [593]
ring-finger. Holding a country knife (*pisánkatti*) in his
left hand, with its point towards the north, he pours the [411]
tamarind juice over his knife with his right hand three times

843
[602] The juice dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks
it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation offi-
ciates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, she is asked
[824] to pick one grain out of several packets of different grains
placed before her. The grain in the packet is supposed to
[574] declare the sex of the child in her womb. The whole ceremo-
ny is wound up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and
[787] friends of the family. The *enangan's* wife at the time pours oil
over the head of the pregnant woman. If the oil flows on the
left side, it predicts the birth of a female; if on the right side, a
male.

Childbirth.

844 When a Nayar woman is about to become a mother, she
is placed in a reclining position on a low
wooden couch (*kattódom*), her back suppor-
ted by a companion, generally an old woman. The *kattódom*
is very like, if not identical with, the couch on which the Nayar
woman has her oil bath. The surface of it is sloping, the
higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out
so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat. Lying on
her back, the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often
she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling by
[564] way of support. The child is received by a woman of the
barber caste, who generally officiates as midwife, and in some
places this duty is performed by a woman of the Vélan caste.
846 Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and on every day, the
mother wears cloths, washed and presented her by *Vannáthi* (a
woman of the washerman caste). On the fifteenth day is the
purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a
man of the Athikurussi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid
mixture of oil, and the five products of the cow (*panchagavyam*)
with gingelly seeds. Then the woman dips herself in a tank
or river or sits on the ground near the bank, and a maid servant
pours on her head the water from a vessel as many as
[184] twenty-one times. This practice is not universal, though it
certainly obtains in the State and in some parts of South
Malabar and Travancore.

846 It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds to
852 purify herself, the new born baby has also to undergo some
rite of purification. The baby is placed on the bare floor, and
its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it

512
613

are also indulged in. In these days of modern civiliza- 592
tion, when schools for boys and girls have increased in [871]
the State, many take advantage of the instruction imparted
in them, so that when the latter become adults, they profit-
ably spend their leisure hours in reading religious and other
books. Towards the evening they go to the temple for wor- [788]
shipping and go round it several times, which, though hygienic
in its origin, is considered of religious importance. They return [264]
home, and their supper is generally before eight o'clock; after
this they retire to their rooms, each married woman occupying
her separate room or set of rooms. They lie on mats or beds [513]
spread on the floor or on the latter placed on cots with which [352]
the rooms are neatly furnished. Such in brief is the family [556]
life and organisation of well-to-do families of the Nayars. In
poor families in which the members subsist by hard work, [184]
the daily routine of life considerably differs from those describ- [735]
ed above.

Mention has already been made of the *káranavan*, who is the 613
manager of all affairs in the Nayar family. He is legally respon- 421
sible for the proper management of the joint property, for the 592
education of the junior members and for everything conducive to the general welfare and happiness of every member of the family. It must be remembered that the family property is joint property and that no member can claim that any portion of it belongs to him or to her, nor can any individual member claim a separate possession or enjoyment of any portion. The ground-work of the system is, that the family property is held in trust for the support of the females and their descendants in the female line. The property is impartible and the family is indissoluble except with the consent of all its members. When, in course of time, the family becomes too unwieldy to be governed and managed by one man, the circumstances and natural forces bring about a division of the family into various distinct sections or families. These separate families keep up the original traditions of their common descent, but have no legal right to the property of one another. The members of the family and their descendants in the female line, thus separated by partition from the main stock, form a *távazhi* (*ta*=mother, *vazhi*=line, *i. e.*, mother's line). They live in a separate building and own that portion of the joint property which is theirs in the partition, and which is managed

Kani with their eyes shut, and, when they are near it, are 796
directed to open them and look at it. It is taken from house
to house for the benefit of the poor. The *kāranavan* of the [618]
family gives small presents of money to the children, servants, [431]
and tenants. It is also the time honoured custom of the State
that on this day the chief officials shall pay their respects to His
Highness the Raja at his residence at Tripunattura, and receive
presents of varying amounts. In former times, it was customary for all the subjects of the ruling princes to pay their
respects to their royal masters with some new year's gifts.
This custom has disappeared, and in its place small presents [431]
are made by tenants and dependents to their landlords which [178]
generally consist of cocoanut, plantains, and other curry-stuffs
—intended probably as a contribution to the celebration. The [574]
day is marked by a grand feast for the members of the household as well as for the tenants and other dependents. To the [431]
Pulayans (the family workmen) are given paddy or rice, oil,
etc., on the previous day to enable them to have their own
celebrations.

(4). The *Dasara* or *Ayutha Puja*, called also as *Saraswati*
Puja, falls in Kanni (September-October) at the autumnal
equinox. It is a festival observed in honour of the Goddess [776]
Saraswati, and every man worships on the last day the implements of his craft and keeps the day a holiday. It is a nine day's festival and is called *Navaratri*.

(5). *Sivaratri*, which falls in Kumbham (February-March), is also an important festival which is observed in common with the members of other higher castes.

Important local festivals.—Of the festivals connected with 796
the temples of the State, the most important is the cock-festi- 184
val (Bharani) at the Cranganore Kali temple, an account of which is given in my notes on the Valans.[1]

In addition to the *Utsavams* (festivals) held once a year in all important temples in the State, there are other popular festivals such as the *Pūrams* at Arattupuzha and Trichur, and the *Kongapada* at Chittur. A short account of the latter is given in the following pages.

The Kongapada festival of Chittur.

The name signifies 'war with Kongan'. The festival falls on the Monday succeeding the Wednesday which immediately follows the new moon in the month of Kumbham (February-March) every year. It will

---

[1] Vide Vol. I, page 298.

796
● 184 come off, therefore, either in the latter part of Kumbham or in
the former part of the next following month of Meenam
according as the new moon in Kumbham occurs earlier or
796 later. The festival is said to be celebrated in commemoration
184 of the victory obtained by the local deity, Bhadrakali,
773 widely known by the local designation of Chittur Bhagavati,
776 in a battle fought with the Kongans, the people of what
was known in ancient days as the 'Kongu Desam' comprising
the localities included in the present British District
of Coimbatore, and lying to the north and east of the
Chittur Taluk. The final engagement was fought in the
eastern out-skirts of the present town of Chittur, and in it
the Kongu chief called in the old songs by the simple
name of 'Kongan' was slain by the Goddess with her own
hand. The place of engagement is now marked by a small
extent of rocky surface, on which is cut the figure of the Bhagavati's
sword with which Kongan's head was cut off. The rock
also shows two holes nearly a foot in depth, and six inches
in diameter. These holes are pointed out by old people
as having been made by the hoofs of the fore-legs of the
Kongan's mount, which is described as a magnificent buff-bull,
when the animal jumped on to the rock in the excitement
caused by the fall of its master from its back slain by the Goddess.
The buff-bull was also slain on the spot. The whole of
the Kongu army was completely routed, and all stampeded to
their country in utter confusion. In the course of the battle a
few men on the side of the Bhagavati were also killed or
wounded, among whom were four important persons belonging
to four ancient families in Chittur, who appear to have been
the leaders of the local militia. The dead bodies of these four
and the wounded were taken from the field of battle and carried
to the town and handed over to the respective families, the
procession being led by the Goddess, who afterwards commanded
the people to celebrate the victory every year, and after
173 entering the temple disappeared into her image within. Tradition
796 speaks thus of the origin of the war. The wealth of the
184 'Kongu Desom' chiefly consisted of chillies, turmeric, coriander,
[439] cumin seed, mustard, areca nut, etc. These commodities
used to be exported for sale, in return for paddy, from Kongu
[492] Desom to Chittur, Palghat, and other places in large quantities

173

laden on the backs of mules, asses, bullocks and buffaloes. 796
When once a large caravansary of Kongu laden with such commodities 184
was passing through Chittur, the people of the four [439]
desams of Chittur, *viz.*, Chittur, Nallepilli, Tattamangalam,
and Pattancheri, robbed the Kongans of all their animals and [492]
goods. The chief of Kongu, on receiving the information,
naturally felt indignant, and despatched an ultimatum to the
Pramánakkars of Chittur, demanding the surrender of the animals
and the articles, failing which, it was said, he would
overrun the four *desams*, destroy the houses, and kill all people
even including women and children. On receiving the
ultimatum, the people went to the temple of the Goddess, and
there read the document before the image of the Goddess. It was
so read by a member of the Chittedath house, in whose custody,
it is said, the original document, written in a copper plate, is
still preserved. The reading of the ultimatum, transcribed in
a piece of cadjan, before the Bhagavati, is one of the essential
functions performed on the night of the Kongapada festival
every year, and it is always done by a member of the Chittedath
family, who dresses himself up in the fashion of a Kongan
and acts the part of the Kongu chief. When the document [776]
was read and the people prayed to their Goddess in one voice
for protection, the Goddess commanded from within the temple
that her 'children' need not fear and that when the Kongan
took steps to enforce his ultimatum, she would protect them.
On receiving no reply to the ultimatum, the Kongan mobilized
his men and crossed the Walayar river, the northern boundary
of the Chittur Taluk. The information about the crossing of the [314]
boundary was first carried to the Chitturians by the Izhuvans [273]
of the vicinity, who were up the palmyra trees early in the
morning for the purpose of tapping for toddy, and they in a
body climbed down the trees, and without removing their
breast protecting leather straps, tapping knives, mallets and
ladders, ran to the four *desams* all in excitement. In view [564]
of the above fact, the advance portion of the day procession
of the Kongapada festival is even to this day made up of
a number of persons, mostly of the Chetti caste, belonging to
the four *desams*, dressed up in the full toddy-tapping kit of
the Izhuvans. They do so every year in pursuance of religious [782]
vows made by them for the attainment of particular

173
796 objects, such as recovery from illness, success in litigation, 184 birth of children, etc.

[782] When the information of the crossing of the Walayar by the chief of Kongu was communicated to the people of the four *desams* by the Izhuvans, they repaired to the temple in excitement and consternation, when Lo! the temple gates opened of themselves and a beautiful female form dressed in full battle armour, brandishing a shining sword and shedding a resplendent divine light, suddenly emerged out of the image within and marched off direct to meet the advancing army of the Kongan, followed by all the brave men among the 796 people. The battle was fought with the result already mentioned. This battle is enacted on the night of the Konga-184 pada festival as one of its essential functions, accompanied by the beating of numerous Pariah drums, blowing of horns, racing of horses, torch-light processions, besides, of course, the usual mischief-making among the youngsters, but the elders generally control them and stop excesses. In the course of the sham fight, some act as the wounded, some even as the dead and fall down on the field of action. These dead and wounded are immediately taken up and carried by the youngsters to their supposed respective houses in the town accompanied with torch-lights, beating of drums, beating of breasts, and crying and weeping. No outsider is allowed to take part in this sacred function. If an outsider, being possessed with any sudden fit of enthusiasm, attempts to take part in this function, 'woe be to him.' This battle function takes place at about 10 o'clock in the night and lasts for two or three hours. At the end of it, the night procession of the festival begins from the battle-field and moves through the Nayar quarters to the temple, where it reaches just before day-break, when there is a display of fireworks. After day-break, the chief of the place or *Nádduvázhi* represented by the Chambath house, accompanied by the people, go to the Goddess' temple to offer prayers of love and gratitude to the Bhagavati. The festival is wound up by a performance on the following night called '*Devendra pallu*' in which all the "one hundred Nayars"[1] of Chittur are

---

[101] [1] **The Nayar community of Chittur is collectively called by the name** [174] **of "Chittur Nooru Nayar." It shows that the original village organisation of Chittur consisted of one hundred Nayar houses or families. Although there is a considerable increase in the number of Nayar houses at present, the appellation 'Nooru Nayar' is still used.**

supposed to take part under the supervision and guidance of 796
the Sríkandath Panikkar, whose family is the military in- 184
structor and leader of the people of Chittur. The Panikkar's duty is to train the youths of the 100 houses in the military arts. The performance referred to is, more or less, an exhi- [431]
bition of the bodily prowess of the youths trained by the Panikkar, and at the end of it he receives presents from the *Náduvázhi* and one hundred fanoms—one fanom for each house—from his pupils. The amount of one hundred fanoms is still paid to him every year, and is defrayed out of the collection made for the Kongapada festival for which the Panikkar's family is exempted from the payment of all subscriptions. The training of the youths of the place is begun a few weeks before the Kongapada festival in the *kalari* (military gymnasium) of the Srikandath Panikkar, and the Panikkar takes a prominent part in all the functions connected with the festival from beginning to end.

The "Pana" festival of Chittur.

Once in a few years and commencing on an auspicious [777]
day after *Vishu*, this ceremony is performed on a grand scale, in which the Nayars of the town (one male member from almost every house) organised themselves into parties, one party for singing songs in praise of the Goddess Bhagavati, another for dancing before her, and the third for playing on musical instruments. These men [782]
have, during this period, to bathe early in the morning, cook their own food and remain under a vow to be ever in devotion to the deity. Preliminary to the celebration of the actual festival, which sometimes run for a number of days, the men are given 41 days' training in the several courses of dancing in the Porayattu family house, one of the four *Pramánakkars* (leading members) of the place, and the final performance takes place in the Pokkumarath house.

In the court-yard of the latter house a large pandal supported on 64 posts, is put, up and in its middle is drawn a floral diagram (*padmam*) over which a lighted brass lamp, and in front of it a stool, are placed with a metal pot of water surmounted by a full pod of cocoanut flowers and a washed cloth arranged in the form of a beautiful crown. The Goddess, who [782]
is supposed to be located therein by means of holy *mantrams*, is propitiated every night between 9 and 12 P. M., with offerings and *pujas*, to the accompaniment of drumming, singing,

796
184 and dancing. This nightly routine of *pujas*, offerings, dancing,
[782] etc., is thus continued for the prescribed number of days.

On the morning following the last day, the votaries purify
[535] themselves by a bath and fetch branches of *pala* trees, and a
[776] dancing procession is organised, which wends its way through
the Nayar streets, accompanied by the Goddess[1] manifested through her *Velichapad*, to the temple of the Goddess, and from there disperse to their respective houses before evening after singing songs of praise and thanks-giving in honour of the Goddess. A pit, 15 feet long, 5 feet broad and 3 feet deep, is then made and filled with ten to fifteen cart-loads of fuel which is burned and reduced to glowing red hot charcoal.
[787] Here also is performed a *pūja*. At about 4 A. M., the *Velichapad* through whom the Goddess manifests herself, the priests,
[789] the votaries, and lastly the caste-men, all walk over the fire several times.

[782] The day dawns and the senior member of the Porayattu family sitting on the stool consecrated to Bhagavati, and covering his head with the silk cloth of the deity, propitiates
[753] her with offerings of fruits, cocoanuts, and fowls. The whole ceremony is thus brought to an end. The object of this pro-
[789] pitiation is to protect people from the attacks of cholera, small-pox, and other epidemics.

Agricultural ceremonies.

241 Before closing this part of the subject, it may be noted that the agricultural year begins with the *Vishu* (first of Medam, about the middle of April) at which
[787] the hot weather is supposed to terminate. In families where the members pursue agriculture as a profession, they send for the local *Kaniyan* (astrologer), who estimates by astronomical calculations the agricultural prospects and the probable quan-
[824] tity of rain during the ensuing year. He is also asked to choose an auspicious day for ploughing, and on that day the master of the house goes to the seed-store with his Pulayan slaves and takes out a small quantity of each variety of seed, which he puts in a cup made of the leaves of the *kanniram* (nux vomica) ; he then places the cups in a basket near a lamp in the yard and places a small heap of rice around or near it. A new ploughshare fastened to a plough, and a pair of oxen are also brought, and these are painted with rice water. They are then taken in procession to the field, on reaching which the

[1] [i.e., The Goddess Bhagavati -- Analyst]

Ucharal is the date on which all agricultural leases should 241
expire, and demand for surrender of property should not be 425
made at any other time, but the courts, by a liberal interpreta- 692
tion, have extended the term up to the day of *Vishu*. Special 184
Ucharal festivals are held at Cherpulasseri in the Walluvanad Taluk and near Shoranur, at which straw models of cattle are taken in procession to the temples of Bhagavati.

* * *

the uneven nature of the terrains. Along the coastal strip, inland waterways are the ideal means of transporting lighter commodities. 000 505

1.49 It is well known that in standards of literacy Kerala is ahead of all the other States of India. The literate population is 46.2 per cent as compared with 23.7 per cent for the whole of India (1961 Census). Kerala has a very long tradition in imparting education on organized lines. Initiative in the spread of education was first taken by the Christian Missionaries during the middle of the last century. The State followed up by offering grant of aid to the missionary schools, and opening of new Government schools. 212 [171] [297] [158]

1.50 While the State is in the forefront of India in general education, it is hardly so in the sphere of technical education. From the point of view of future industrialization programmes, the emphasis in future will have to undergo a shift in position. During the Second Plan period considerable progress has been made in opening a number of polytechnics and other technical institutions. Their impact, however, will only be felt during the Third Plan period when qualified technicians start coming out from these institutes. 874

1.51 The State is also fairly high up in the standard of its health services although in some of the indices of health service development it lags behind all-India standards. On the other hand the *ayurvedic* system has had a long established tradition in the State and is popular among the public. Some of the indices showing the relative state of development of medical facilities are given below: 744

[171]

	India (Persons)	*Kerala* (Persons)
One doctor for	7,000	5,200
One nurse for	19,000	16,700
One hospital bed for	1,400	3,125

Regional Disparities

1.52 Although the infra-structure as a whole is well developed in the State, it is not uniformly so all over the State. Economically, Malabar, which was previously a part of the Madras State, is on a distinctly different plane from the Travancore-Cochin area. Unlike the erstwhile States of Travancore and Cochin, Malabar did not receive the benefit of State patronage. At present Malabar is backward compared to Travancore-Cochin in terms of almost all the indicators of economic development. Both the transport and education system are not as well developed in Malabar as in Travancore-Cochin.[1] It lags behind industrially as well. Unemployment also seems to be higher in Malabar. This is corroborated by the much lower participation rate in the case of Malabar.[2] Under these circumstances, economic policy would undoubtedly have to pay due attention to the need for levelling up such wide disparities. 433* 184

---

[1] Chapters on "Industries—Structure and Growth" and "Transport". (Nos. 9 and 8)

[2] Chapter on Manpower. (No. 11)

As explained earlier, the effective capacity could not be increased beyond 84.5 MW mainly on account of foreign exchange difficulties. 433* 377

7.14 The relative shares of various consumers in the coming years will naturally depend on the pace of economic development. Nevertheless, it can be reliably forecast that the relative proportions will not significantly change and industry will retain its predominant place since it is expected that the industrial development will continue to be considered the pivot for economic growth of Kerala.

7.15 Per capita consumption of electrical energy in the State was about 27.75 kWh in 1959-60, which was slightly less than the all-India level of 30.45 kWh.

Regional Distribution of Electricity Facilities

7.16 There is some imbalance in the distribution of electricity in Kerala. The southern districts which were part of the former progressive State of Travancore-Cochin, are more developed from the standpoint of industry and power, whereas the northern districts constituting the Malabar area are comparatively backward. The relative position of different districts in this regard is indicated in Table 34.* 377 184

7.17 Similarly, the network of transmission and distribution lines also depicts a concentration of electrical facilities in the south or south-central region. Naturally, this has led to a clustering of industries in this area. However, it is possible to even out the position in future by undertaking the extension of transmission lines to the northern parts of Kerala as well. The present programme of extending 110 KV line to the north is a step in the proper direction.

Cost of Power Generation

7.18 One of the outstanding features of power development in Kerala is the low cost of generation. Generally investment per kW of installed capacity is higher in the case of hydro schemes than in the case of thermal power stations. In Kerala, however, the figure for investment per kW of installed capacity is Rs. 750 to Rs. 900 for hydro schemes which is no higher than in the case of thermal stations. Most of the hydro sites are still unexploited and are ideally suitable for hydel generation. Since the catchment areas of hydel projects receive rain from both the south-west and north-east monsoons, the storage capacity required per kW of generating capacity is relatively small which in turn reduces the overall capital cost per kW. It is because of these factors that the initial investment normally incurred in case of hydro-electric schemes in Kerala, excluding transmission and distribution, is as low as Rs. 750 to Rs. 900 per kW of installed capacity against the all-India average of Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 2,000. Not only investment per kW of installed capacity is about the same for hydro and thermal projects in Kerala, the foreign exchange component of investment on hydro schemes up to generation, will also be of the order of only 25 per cent whereas in case of thermal schemes it is about 50 to 60 per cent. 377 435

7.19 Since the capital cost of hydro-power in Kerala is exceptionally low, the average cost of generation from the existing hydro stations is only 1.7 nP per unit. In the case of schemes under execution as well as the schemes already investigated,

---

*[Table 34, appearing on p.293 of the text, has not been processed--Analyst]

TABLE 6

VALUATION OF FOREIGN EXPORTS FROM THE PORTS OF COCHIN, ALLEPPEY AND CALICUT

439

(Rs. lakhs)

Some important commodities of export	*1953-54*	*1954-55*	*1955-56*	*1956-57**	*1957-58*
Cardamom	22.44	32.84	50.17	54.84	55.90
Cashew(kernels and liquids)	927.55	1,014.52	1,155.12	1,112.02	1,141.82
Coffee	72.39	82.88	93.69	76.50	90.75
Coir and Coir Products	804.00	731.37	856.86	878.09	704:87
Fish and Prawns	102.69	79.34	31.85	123.86	149.33
Ginger	27.94	33.24	58.71	61.40	39.23
Metals, Minerals, Ores	21.56	22.78	28.93	77.10	60.77
Lemon grass oil	72.62	104.73	130.65	147.00	138.41
Pepper	962.13	569.81	378.61	341.69	295.67
Tea	1,912.96	2,196.86	1,992.17	1,974.75	2,434.78
Others	235.72	443.83	391.64	525.75	491.40
Total Value of Foreign Exports	*5,162*	*5,312*	*5,369*	*5,343*	*5,603*
Total Value of Exports to Ports of India	*2,238*	*2,193*	*2,489*	*2,404*	*2,318*
Value of Total Exports	**7,400**	**7,505**	**7,858**	**7,747**	**7,921**

*Value of exports from Calicut includes exports to both foreign and Indian ports.

SOURCE: *Economic Review of Kerala*, 1959.

TABLE 7

CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF HOLDINGS AND LAND AREA OF HOLDINGS IN TRAVANCORE-COCHIN AREA AND THE MALABAR DISTRICT

423
184

Grade of holdings	*Travancore-Cochin*		*Malabar*	
	No. of holdings	*Area*	*No. of holdings*	*Area*
Up to 1 acre	66.72	16.49	28.91	2.43
Up to 2.50 acres	86.47	36.96	51.52	8.22
Up to 5 acres	94.84	57.07	60.55	17.68
Up to 10 acres	98.35	73.35	83.79	32.30
Up to 20 acres	99.50	83.59	93.91	52.58
Up to 40 acres	99.86	90.15	97.88	68:57
Up to 100 acres	..	..	99.62	82.37
All	*100.00*	*100.00*	*100.00*	*100.00*

SOURCE: *Kerala 1959: An Economic Review*, Government of Kerala (1960).

TABLE 14

THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED COFFEE ESTATES ACCORDING TO SIZE AND AREA AS ON THE 31ST JULY 1958

(Area in acres)

District	*Below 5 acres*		*5 to 10*		*10 to 25*		*25 to 50*		*50 to 100*		*100 to 200*		*150 to 200*		*200 to 250*		*250 and above*		*Total*	
	No.	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*	*No.*	*Area*
Malabar	9,121	16,187	1,123	4,936	515	4,956	62	2,272	46	2,965	10	1,218	8	1,293	6	1,336	14	5,650	10,505	40,813
Kottayam	3,130	3,596	185	56	58	57	14	343	5	323	1	129	1	150	..		1	703	3,395	5,367
Cochin	5	..	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	125	3	561	2		1	330	15	1,016
Quilon	147	N.A.	2	N.A.	..	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	149	30

Source: *Eighteenth Annual Report, 1957-58*, Vol. IV., Coffee Board.

[113]

245
423
184

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962. AWll Kerala AWll

162
464
184

TABLE 60

UNEMPLOYMENT POSITION IN KERALA

Activity status	*Travancore-Cochin*		*Malabar*		*Kerala*	
I	II		III		IV=II+III	
	Absolute number (In lakhs)	*Percentage to total population*	*Absolute number* (In lakhs)	*Percentage to total population*	*Absolute number* (In lakhs)	*Percentage to total population*
(*a*) Below 15 years age	41.3	40.7	20.7	36.9	62.0	39.4
(*b*) Above 15 years	60.2	60.1	35.3	63.0	95.5	60.6
1. Students	4.0	4.0	1.2	2.1	5.2	3.3
2. Disabled or too old	4.6	4.5	3.2	5.7	7.8	4.9
3. Pensioners or Rentiers	1.1	1.4	0.5	0.4	1.2	0.8
4. Having Regular Employment	19.7	19.6	9.8	17.5	29.5	18.7
5. Household Workers	19.2	19.0	10.9	19.4	30.1	19.1
6. Casual Workers	9.1	8.0	7.2	12.1	15.2	9.6
7. People in search of employment	3.7	3.6	2.9	5.9	6.6	4.2
TOTAL POPULATION	*101.6*	*100*	*56.0*	*100*	*157.6*	*100*
LABOUR FORCE (4+6+7)	*31.4*	*30.9*	*19.87*	*35.5*	*51.2*	*32.6*
Category (7) as percentage of labour force	*3.7*	*11.62*	*2.9*	*14.64*	*6.66*	*12.79*

SOURCE: The Statistics Department, Government of Kerala.

464
162

TABLE 61

COMPARATIVE SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING FORCE

Sector	*Proportion of working force*	
	1956	*1971*
1. Primary Sector	54.9	42.2
2. Secondary Sector	19.3	24.6
(*a*) Factory Sector	3.4	9.2
(*b*) Non-factory Sector and Mining	15.9	15.4
3. Tertiary Sector	25.8	33.2
TOTAL	*100.0*	*100.0*

[PP. 1-158 not Processed]

CHAPTER 2

THE POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS (TIYAS), KAMMALANS, AND OTHER ARTISAN CASTES OF KERALA

Anthropological research in Kerala is not, and never has been, easy. 114
Human society there, as we shall see from what follows, is extremely 184
complex, being made up of innumerable Hindu castes, sub-castes and
outcastes, to which must be added other non-Hindu communities, such
as the Moslems, Christians, and Jews. To gain an insight into these, or
even, as in our case, into only a section of them – namely those prac-
tising polyandry – is a painstaking affair, especially when one realizes,
as one very soon does, that the customs of a single ethnic group are by
no means uniform in the whole state and often vary radically from north
to south.

The climate, too, is a problem. Most of Kerala is damp and tropical 114
all the year round, with a very wet period during the summer monsoon [132]
from June to October. The record density of the population makes for [161]
poor and inadequate quarters in which to live. Communications are bad, [484]
the rainy season disrupting traffic quite seriously with floods and high
winds because of the physical nature of the land, which can be described
as follows.

A. KERALA, A DESCRIPTION

1. ENVIRONMENT

The State of Kerala stretches, today, from the boundary of South Canara 131
in Mysore State in the north, to Cape Comorin in the south, the latter
being the most southerly point of the Indian continent. It is an extreme-
ly narrow belt of coastland, only five miles wide at some points and
never exceeding seventy at its widest, which is at the Palghat gap. It is
bordered on the west by the Arabian Sea of the Indian Ocean, in which [133]
are to be found the Laccadive islands, administratively part of the State,
and on the east, by the imposing range of mountains called the Western

105 588 Without going into the elaborate details of the occasion – which are very different, depending on the caste to which the girl belongs – it is enough to mention that its main item is the tying of the *tali* round the child's neck by someone who is, usually, a substitute bridegroom or *manavalan*. He should be of a higher or at least of the same caste, but he can also be an old, venerable person who has already done this, for instance, to the mother; sometimes the father takes the place of the *manavalan*, at others, it is the maternal uncle. That the mother herself should do so, is not unknown, and cases in which a clay figure has taken the place of a live person are on record. It has also become increasingly the custom to tie the *tali* on many girls at the same time (to save expense), and the tendency is to do the ceremony earlier and earlier in the children's lives.

After the man who ties the *tali* has fulfilled his task, he is not entitled to touch the girl. But shades of the times when he perhaps did do so still exist in the practice of his attempting to force the girl's bedchamber door, and of his being pelted by male onlookers belonging to her kin group, which does take place in some of the lower castes. In south Malabar, he is supposed to lie down under the same blanket with the girl for a few moments; among the Ambalavasis, and in some of the sub-castes, he may even spend three nights with her, but under the strict supervision of a chaperon put there to see that he does not touch her. In some cases, a form of divorce ends the ceremony before the *manavalan* is allowed to go. *Tali* tying is universal in Kerala, where it is not ¶[184] limited to the Hindus only, but is also practised by the Moslem Moplas and the Christians.

105 581 588 833 [183] It is interesting to note that the Portuguese traveller of the beginning of the sixteenth century, Duarte Barbosa, mentions that before a Nayar girl can be married, afer the *tali* has been tied on her, she should be deflowered before puberty, by some young man called in specially to do this from outside the caste, "for amongst themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women" (*The Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, p. 124).

4. LAND-TENURE

105 241 Kerala is an agricultural state and everyone in it is either dependant on the produce of the land or linked to it by serving those who till the soil. The main crops are rice, coconuts, pepper and arecanuts, in that order of importance. Others, less important, are pulses, tapioca, spices such

564 country. They are confined to a few localities in
[184] Travancore, and until recently there was a distinctive
difference in regard to dress and ornaments between the
[463] Tamil Padam and the ordinary Nāyars. The occupation
of the Padamangalakkar is temple service, such as
sweeping, carrying lamps during processions, etc. The
Tamil Padakkar are believed to have taken to various
kinds of occupation, and, for this reason, to have become
merged with other sections.

5. Vāthi or Vātti.—This name is not found in the
Jatinirnaya, probably because it had not been differen-
tiated from Mārān. The word is a corruption of vāzhti,
meaning praying for happiness, and refers to their
[534] traditional occupation. They use a peculiar drum,
called nantuni. Some call themselves Daivampatis, or
wards of God, and follow the makkathāyam system of
inheritance (in the male line).

6. Itacheri or Idacheri, also called Pantaris in
[234] South Travancore. They are herdsmen, and vendors of
milk, butter and curds. The name suggests a relation
of some kind to the Idaiyan caste of the Tamil country.

7. Karuvelam, known also by other names, such as
[644] Kappiyara and Tiruvattar. Their occupation is service
in the palace of the Mahārāja, and they are the custodians of his treasury and valuables. Fifty-two families are believed to have been originally brought from Kolathanād, when a member thereof was adopted into the Travancore royal family.

8. Arikuravan.—A name, meaning those who reduced the quantity of rice out of the paddy given to them to husk at the temple of Kazhayakkuttam near Trivandrum, by which they were accosted by the local chieftain.

9. Pallichchan.—Bearers of palanquins for Brāhmans and Malabar chieftains. They are also employed

practice continued till recently. Hamilton and Buchanan 595
say that, among the Nāyars of Malabar, a woman has several husbands, but these are not brothers. These travellers came to Malabar in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. There is no reason whatever to suppose that they were not just recording what they saw. For I am not quite sure whether, even now, the practice is not lurking in some remote nooks and corners of the country." Lastly, Mr. Wigram writes as follows.* "Polyandry may now [851]
be said to be dead, and, although the issue of a Nāyar [581]
marriage are still children of their mother rather than of their father, marriage may be defined as a contract based on mutual consent, and dissoluble at will. It has been well said (by Mr. Logan) that nowhere is the marriage tie, albeit informal, more rigidly observed or respected than it is in Malabar: nowhere is it more jealously guarded, or its neglect more savagely avenged."

In connection with the tāli-kattu kalyānam, or tāli- 588
tying marriage, Mr. Fawcett writes that "the details of [184]
this ceremony vary in different parts of Malabar, but the [881]
ceremony in some form is essential, and must be performed for every Nāyar girl before she attains puberty." For an account of this ceremony, I must resort, to the evidence of Mr. K. R. Krishna Menon before the Malabar Marriage Commission.†

"The tāli-kattu kalyānam is somewhat analogous to what a dēva-dāsi (dancing-girl) of other countries (districts) undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal families, and those of certain Edaprabhus, a Kshatriya, and among the Charna sect a Nedungādi is

---

* Malabar Law and Custom, 1882.

† Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, 1894.

588

of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting [613]
on anklets, etc. The purōhit (officiating priest) called [564]
Elayath (a low class of Brāhmans) then gives the tāli [793]
to the Mānavālan, and 'the family astrologer shouts [787]
muhurtham (auspicious hour), and the Manavālan,
putting his sword on the lap, ties the tāli round the
neck of the girl, who is then required to hold an
arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families [556]
a Brāhmani sings certain songs intended to bless the [533]
couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her
presence, a Nāyar, versed in songs, performs the office.
The boy and girl are then carried by enangans to [783]
a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house,
where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution
for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in
some neighbouring tank (pond) or river, holding each
other's hands. After changing their clothes they come
home, preceded by a procession. Tom-toms (native [534]
drums) and elephants usually form part of the procession, [231]
and turmeric water is sprinkled. When they come
home, all doors of the house are shut, and the Manavālan is
required to force them open. He then enters the house,
and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt
and female friends of the girl then approach, and give
sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the [264]
boy, and, after taking their meal together from the same
leaf, they proceed to the booth, where a cloth is severed
into two parts, and each part given to the Manavālan
and girl separately in the presence of enangans and
friends. The severing of the cloth is supposed to [586]
constitute a divorce." "The tearing of the cloth," [184]
Mr. Fawcett writes, "is confined to South Malabar.
These are the essentials of the ceremony, an adjunct to [765]
which is that, in spite of the divorce, the girl observes

588 [765] death pollution when her Manavâlan dies. The same
Manavâlan may tie the tâli on any number of girls,
during the same ceremony or at any other time, and he
[793] may be old or young. He is often an elderly holy Brâh-
[564] man, who receives a small present for his services. The
girl may remove the tâli, if she likes, after the fourth day.
[184] In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the
man who performs the rôle of Manavâlan is considered
to have some right to the girl, but in such case it has
been already considered that he is a proper man to enter
into sambandham with her."

588 184 Of the tâli-kattu kalyânam in Malabar, the following
detailed account, mainly furnished by an Urâli Nâyar of
Calicut, is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "An
auspicious time has to be selected for the purpose, and
the preliminary consultation of the astrologer is in itself
the occasion of a family gathering. The Manavâlan or
quasi-bridegroom is chosen at the same time. For the
actual kalyânam, two pandals (booths), a small one
inside a large one, are erected in front of the padinhätta
macchu or central room of the western wing. They are
decorated with cloth, garlands, lamps and palm leaves,
and the pillars should be of areca palm cut by an Asâri
[778] on Sunday, Monday, or Wednesday. The first day's
[789] ceremonies open with a morning visit to the temple,
where the officiating Brâhman pours water sanctified by
mantrams (religious formulæ), and the addition of leaves
of mango, peepul and darbha, over the girl's head. This
[354] rite is called kalasam maduga. The girl then goes home,
and is taken to the macchu, where a hanging lamp
with five wicks is lighted. This should be kept alight
[352] during all the days of the kalyânam. The girl sits on a
[824] piece of pala (*Alstonia scholaris*) wood, which is called
[301] a mana. She is elaborately adorned, and some castes

consider a coral necklace an essential. In her right 588
hand she holds a vālkannādi (brass hand mirror), and in 184
her left a charakkal (a highly ornate arrow). In front of [301]
the girl are placed, in addition to the five-wicked lamp and nirachaveppu, a metal dish or talam of parched rice, and the eight lucky things known as ashtamangalyam. A woman, termed Brahmini or Pushpini, usually of the Nambissan caste, sits facing her on a three-legged stool (pidam), and renders appropriate and lengthy songs, at the close of which she scatters rice over her. About midday there is a feast, and in the evening songs in the macchu are repeated. Next morning, the ceremonial in the macchu is repeated for the third time, after which the paraphernalia are removed to the nearest tank or to the east of the household well, where the Pushpini sings once more, goes through the form of making the girl's toilet, and ties a cocoanut frond round each of her wrists (kappōla). The girl has then to rise and jump over a kindi (vessel) of water with an unhusked cocoanut placed on the top, overturning it the third time. The party then proceed to the pandal, two men holding a scarlet cloth over the girl as a canopy, and a Chāliyan (weaver) brings two cloths (kōdi vaṣtiram), which the girl puts on. In the evening, the previous day's ceremonial is repeated in the macchu. The third day is the most important, and it is then that the central act of the ceremony is performed. For this the girl sits in the inner pandal richly adorned. In some cases she is carried from the house to the pandal by her karnavan or brother, who makes a number of pradakshinams round the pandal (usually 3 or 7) before he places her in her
seat. Before the girl are the various objects already [533]
specified, and the hymeneal ditties of the Pushpini open the proceedings. At the auspicious moment the

588
184 Manavālan arrives in rich attire. He is often preceded by a sort of body guard with sword and shield who utter a curious kind of cry, and is met at the gate of the girl's house by a bevy of matrons with lamps and salvers decorated with flowers and lights, called talams. A man of the girl's family washes his feet, and he takes his seat in the pandal on the girl's right. Sometimes the girl's father at this stage presents new cloths (mantravādi or mantrokōdi) to the pair, who at once don them. The girl's father takes the tāli, a small round plate of gold about the size of a two-anna bit, with a hole at the top, from the goldsmith who is in waiting, pays him for it, [787] and gives it to the Manavālan. The karnavan or father of the girl asks the astrologer thrice if the moment has arrived, and, as he signifies his assent the third time, the Manavālan ties the tāli round the girl's neck amidst the shouts of those present. The Manavālan carries the girl indoors to the macchu, and feasting brings the day to [533] a close. Tom-toming and other music are of course incessant accompaniments throughout as on other festal occasions, and the women in attendance keep up a curious kind of whistling, called kurava, beating their lips with their fingers. On the fourth day, girl and Manavālan go in procession to the temple richly dressed. The boy, carrying some sort of sword and shield, heads [782] the party. If the family be one of position, he and the girl must be mounted on an elephant. Offerings are made to the deity, and presents to the Brāhmans. They then return home, and, as they enter the house, the Manavālan who brings up the rear is pelted by the boys of the party with plantains, which he wards off with his shield. In other cases, he is expected to make a pretence of forcing the door open. These two usages are no doubt to be classed with those marriage ceremonies which take the

form of a contest between the bridegroom and the bride's 528
relatives, and which are symbolic survivals of marriage 184
by capture. The Manavâlan and the girl next partake of food together in the inner pandal—a proceeding which obviously corresponds to the ceremonious first meal of a newly-married couple. The assembled guests are lavishly [574] entertained. The chief Kovilagans and big Nāyar houses will feed 1,000 Brāhmans as well as their own relations, and spend anything up to ten or fifteen thousand rupees on the ceremony."

Concerning the tâli-kettu ceremony in Travancore Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "After the age of eleven, a Nāyar girl becomes too old for this ceremony, though, in some rare instances, it is celebrated after a girl attains her age. As among other castes, ages [801] represented by an odd number, *e.g.*, seven, nine, and eleven, have a peculiar auspiciousness attached to them. Any number of girls, even up to a dozen, may go through the ceremony at one time, and they may include infants under one year—an arrangement prompted by considerations of economy, and rendered possible by the fact that no civil or religious right or liability is contracted as between the parties. The duty of getting the girls of the tarwad 'married' devolves on the karanavaṇ, or in his default on the eldest brother, the father's obligation being discharged by informing him that the time for the ceremony has arrived. The masters of the ceremonies at [622] a Nāyar tâli-kettu in Travancore are called Machchampikkar, *i.e.*, men in the village, whose social status is equal to that of the tarwad in which the ceremony is to be celebrated. At a preliminary meeting of the Machchampikkar, the number of girls for whom the ceremony is to be performed, the bridegrooms, and other details are settled. The horoscopes are examined by the village [787]

588
184 astrologer, and those youths in the tarwads who have [787] passed the age of eighteen, and whose horoscopes agree with those of the girls, are declared to be eligible. The ola (palm-leaf) on which the Kaniyan (astrologer) writes his decision is called the muhurta charutu, and the individual who receives it from him is obliged to see that the ceremony is performed on an auspicious day in the near future. The next important item is the fixing of a wooden post in the south-west corner or kannimula of the courtyard. At the construction of the pandal (booth) the Pidakakkar or villagers render substantial aid. The mandapa is decorated with ears of corn, and hence called katirmandapa. It is also called mullapandal. On the [533] night of the previous day the kalati or Brâhman's song is sung. A sumptuous banquet, called ayaniunnu, is given at the girl's house to the party of the young man. The ceremony commences with the bridegroom washing his feet, and taking his seat within the pandal. The girl meanwhile bathes, worships the household deity, and is dressed in new cloths and adorned with costly ornaments. A Brâhman woman ties a thread round the girl's left wrist, and sings a song called Subhadraveli, which deals with the marriage by capture of Subhadra by Arjuna. Then, on the invitation of the girl's mother, who throws a garland round his neck, the bridegroom goes in procession, riding on an elephant, or on foot. The girl's brother is waiting to receive him at the pandal. A leading villager is presented with some money, as if to recompense him for the permission granted by him to commence the ceremony. The girl sits within the mandapa, facing the east, with her eyes closed. The bridegroom, on his arrival, sits on her right. He then receives the minnu (ornament) from the Ilayatu priest, and ties it round the girl's neck. A song is sung called

A song is sung called ammachampattu, or the song of the maternal uncle. If 588 there are several brides, they sit in a row, each holding 184 ● in her hand an arrow and a looking-glass, and the [533] ornaments are tied on their necks in the order of their ages. Unless enangans are employed, there is usually only one tâli-tier, whatever may be the number of girls. In cases where, owing to poverty, the expenses of the ceremony cannot be borne, it is simply performed in front of a Brâhman temple, or in the pandaramatam, or house of the village chieftain. In many North Travancore taluks the girl removes her tali as soon as she hears of the tali-tier's death." It is noted by the Rev. S. Mateer * that "a Nair girl of Travancore must get married with the tâli before the age of eleven to avoid reproach from friends and neighbours. In case of need a sword may even be made to represent a bridegroom." Sometimes, when a family is poor, the girl's mother makes an idol of clay, adorns it with flowers, and invests her daughter with the tâli in the presence of the idol.

In an account of the tali-kettu ceremony, in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, it is stated that "the celebration of the ceremony is costly, and advantage is therefore taken of a single occasion in the course of ten or twelve years, at which all girls in a family, irrespective of their ages, and, when parties agree, all girls belonging to families that observe death pollution between one another go through the ceremony. The ceremony opens with the fixing of a post for the construction of a pandal or shed, which is beautifully decorated with cloth, pictures and festoons. The male members of the village are [574] invited, and treated to a feast followed by the distribution

---

* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., XII, 1883.

588
184 of pān-supāri. Every time that a marriage ceremony is
[574] celebrated, a member of the family visits His Highness
the Rāja with presents, and solicits his permission for
the celebration. Such presents are often made to the
Nambūdri Jenmis (landlords), by their tenants, and by
[424] castes attached to illams. It may be noted that certain
[643] privileges, such as sitting on a grass mat, having an
elephant procession, drumming, firing of pop-guns, etc.,
have often to be obtained from the Ruler of the State.
The marriage itself begins with the procession to the
marriage pandal with the eight auspicious things
(ashtamangalyam) and pattiniruththal (seating for song),
at the latter of which a Brāhmini or Pushpini sings certain
songs based upon suitable Purānic texts. The girls and
other female members of the family, dressed in gay attire
and decked with costly ornaments, come out in procession to the pandal, where the Pushpini sings, with
tom-toms and the firing of pop-guns at intervals. After
three, five, or seven rounds of this, a cutting of the
jasmine placed in a brass pot is carried on an elephant
by the Elayad or family priest to the nearest Bhagavati
temple, where it is planted on the night previous to the
ceremonial day with tom-toms, fireworks, and joyous
shouts of men and women. A few hours before the
auspicious moment for the ceremony, this cutting is
[782] brought back. Before the tāli is tied, the girls are
brought out of the room, and, either from the ground
itself or from a raised platform, beautifully decorated
with festoons, etc., are made to worship the sun. The
bridegroom, a Tirumulpād or an enangan, is then
brought into the house with sword in hand, with tom-toms, firing of pop-guns, and shouts of joy. At the gate
he is received by a few female members with ashtamangalyam in their hands, and seated on a bench or

stool in the pandal. A male member of the family, 588
generally a brother or maternal uncle of the girl, washes 184
the feet of the bridegroom. The girls are covered with
new cloths of cotton or silk, and brought into the pandal,
and seated screened off from one another. After the [431]
distribution of money presents to the Brāhmans and the
Elayad, the latter hands over the tāli, or thin plate of
gold shaped like the leaf of aswatha (*Ficus religiosa*),
and tacked on to a string, to the Tirumulpād, who ties it
round the neck of the girl. A single Tirumulpād often
ties the tāli round the neck of two, three, or four girls.
He is given one to eight rupees per girl for so doing.
Sometimes the tāli is tied by the mother of the girl.
The retention of the tāli is not at all obligatory, nay it is
seldom worn or taken care of after the ceremony. These
circumstances clearly show the purely ceremonial
character of this form of marriage. The Karamel Asan,
or headman of the village, is an important factor on this
occasion. In a conspicuous part of the marriage pandal, [622]
he is provided with a seat on a cot, on which a grass
mat, a black blanket, and white cloth are spread one
over the other. Before the tāli is tied, his permission
is solicited for the performance of the ceremony. He is
paid 4, 8, 16, 32 or 64 puthans (a puthan = 10 pies) per
girl, according to the means of the family. He is also
given rice, curry stuff, and pān-supāri. Rose-water is
sprinkled at intervals on the males and females
assembled on the occasion. With the distribution of 574
pān-supāri, scented sandal paste and jasmine flowers to 588
the females of the village and wives of relatives and 184
friends, who are invited for the occasion, these guests
return to their homes. The male members, one or two
from each family in the village, are then treated to a
sumptuous feast. In some places, where the Enangu

588 184 [574] system prevails, all members of such families, both male and female, are also provided with meals. On the third day, the villagers are again entertained to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding, and on the fourth day the girls are taken out in procession for worship at the nearest temple amidst tom-toms and shouting. After this a feast is held, at which friends, relatives, and villagers are given a rich meal. With the usual distribution of pān-supāri, sandal and flowers, the invited guests depart. [431] Presents, chiefly in money, are made to the eldest male member of the family by friends and relatives and villagers, and with this the ceremony closes. [787] From the time of fixing the first pole for the pandal to the tying of the tāli, the village astrologer is in attendance on all ceremonial occasions, as he has to pronounce the auspicious moment for the performance of each item. [536] During the four days of the marriage, entertainments, such as Kathakali drama or Ottan Tullal, are very common. When a family can ill-afford to celebrate the ceremony on any grand scale, the girls are taken to the nearest temple, or to the illam of a Nambūdri, if they happen to belong to sub-divisions attached to illams, and the tāli [735] is tied with little or no feasting and merriment. In the northern taluks, the very poor people sometimes tie the tāli before the Trikkakkarappan on the Tiruvonam day."

An interesting account of the tāli-kettu ceremony is given by Duarte Barbosa, who writes as follows.* "After they are ten or twelve years old or more, their mothers perform a marriage ceremony for them in this manner. They advise the relations and friends that they may come to do honour to their daughters, and they

---

* *Op. cit.*

beg some of their relations and friends to marry these 588
daughters, and they do so. It must be said that they 184
have some gold jewel made, which will contain half a ducat of gold, a little shorter than the tag of lace, with a hole in the middle passing through it, and they string it on a thread of white silk; and the mother of the girl stands with her daughter very much dressed out, and entertaining her with music and singing, and a number of people. And this relation or friend of hers comes with much earnestness, and there performs the ceremony of marriage, as though he married her, and they throw a gold chain round the necks of both of them together, and he puts the above mentioned jewel round her neck, which she always has to wear as a sign that she may now do what she pleases. And the bridegroom leaves her and goes away without touching her nor more to say to her on account of being her relation; and, if he is not so, he may remain with her if he wish it, but he is not bound to do so if he do not desire it. And from [833] that time forward the mother goes begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women."

The tāli-kettu ceremony is referred to by Kerr, who, 588 in his translation of Castaneda, states that "these sisters of the Zamorin, and other kings of Malabar, have handsome allowances to live upon; and, when any of them reaches the age of ten, their kindred send for a young man of the Nāyar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin; after which he hangs a jewel round her neck, which she wears all the rest of her life, as a token that she is now at liberty to dispose of herself to anyone she pleases as long as she lives."

588
178 Nāyars by divine law to administer to the lust of the
174 Nambūdris were disseminated abroad. The better
[585] classes among the Nāyars revolted against the degrading
custom thus established, and a custom sprang up,
[613] especially in North Malabar, of making sambandham a
more or less formal contract, approved and sanctioned by the karnavan (senior male) of the tarwad to which the lady belonged, and celebrated with elaborate
585 ceremony under the pudamuri form. That there was
[174] nothing analogous to the pudamuri prevalent in Malabar
from A.D. 1550 to 1800 may, I think, be fairly presumed from the absence of all allusion to it in the works of the various European writers." According to Act IV, Madras, 1896, sambandham means an alliance between a man and a woman, by reason of which they in accordance with the custom of the community to which they belong, or either of them belongs, cohabit or intend to cohabit as husband and wife.

Of sambandham the following account was given by Mr. Chandu Menon to the Malabar Marriage Commission. "The variations of the sambandham are the pudamuri, vastradānam, uzhamporukkuka, vitāram kayaruka, etc., which are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malaiyāli who would not readily understand what is meant by sambandham tudanguga (to begin sambandham). The meaning of this phrase, which means to 'marry,' is understood throughout Kēraḷam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it. It is thus found that sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among marumakkatāyam
[192] Nāyars. [Sambandhakāran is now the common term for
[184] husband.] It will also be found, on a close and careful
examination of facts, that the principal features of this

sambandham ceremony all over Kēralam are in the main 585
the same. As there are different local names denoting 184 ●
marriage, so there may be found local variations in the
performance of the ceremony. But the general features
are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, [787]
prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the
bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars
agree astrologically; the appointment of an auspicious
day for the celebration of the ceremony; the usual hour
at which the ceremony takes place; the presentation [431]
of dānam (gifts) to Brāhmans; sumptuous banquet; the [574]
meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are features
which are invariably found in all well-conducted sambandhams
in all parts of Kēralam alike. But here I
would state that I should not be understood as saying
that each and every one of the formalities above referred
to are gone through at all sambandhams among
respectable Nāyars; and I would further state that they
ought to be gone through at every sambandham, if the
parties wish to marry according to the custom of the
country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations
to be found in the ceremony of the sambandham,
and also the particular incidents attached to certain
forms of sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe
the pudamuri or vastradānam as celebrated in
North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of
sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of sambandham,
I consider the pudamuri the most solemn and
the most fashionable in North Malabar. The preliminary [787]
ceremony in every pudamuri is the examination
of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom by an
astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride,
in the presence of the relations of the bride and bridegroom.
The astrologer, after examination, writes down

585

184 the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf,
[787] with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match,
and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the
horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the
[212] celebration of the marriage. This date is also written
down on two pieces of cadjan (palm leaf), one of which is
handed over to the bride's Karanavan, and the other
[791] to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the
[574] bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house,
and the former also receives presents in the shape of
[431] money or cloth. This preliminary ceremony, which
is invariably performed at all pudamuris in North
Malabar, is called pudamuri kurikkal, but is unknown
in South Malabar. Some three or four days prior to
the date fixed for the celebration of the pudamuri, the
bridegroom visits his Karanavans and elders in caste,
[584] to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on
such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts,
and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On
the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset
to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of
his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at
the gate of the house by the bride's party, and conducted with his friends to seats provided in the tekkini
[431] or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom
[574] distributes presents (dānam) or money gifts to the
Brāhmans assembled. After this, the whole party is
treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the
astrologer to appear, and announce the auspicious hour
fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues.
The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the
padinhatta or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a
quantity of new cloths, and betel leaves and nuts. The

The cloths are placed in the western room of the house 585 184 (padinhatta), in which all religious and other important [342] household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and ashtamangalyam, which consists of eight articles symbolical of mangalyam or marriage. These are rice, paddy (unhusked rice), the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round box called cheppu. These will be found placed on the floor of the room as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groomsman enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloths and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east, with the ashtamangalyam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groomsman then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride sprinkles rice over the lamps and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom, who immediately leaves the room, as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkini or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride. Next morning, the vettilakettu [574] or salkâram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is feasting in honour of the occasion. Uzhamporukkuka or vidâram kayaral is a peculiar form

575 of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the
184 description given above that the pudamuri is necessarily
a costly ceremony, and many people resort to the less
costly ceremony of uzhamporukkuka or vīdāram kayaral.
The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the
same as pudamuri, but it is celebrated on a smaller scale.
[574] There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The feasting is
confined to the relations of the couple. The particular
incident of this form of marriage is that the husband
should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to
take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the
regular pudamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered
to in North Malabar, and instances in which the
husband and wife joined by the uzhamporukkuka ceremony,
and with grown-up children as the issue of such
marriage, undergo the pudamuri ceremony some fifteen
or twenty years after uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable
the husband to take the wife to his house, are known
to me personally. The sambandham of South Malabar,
and the kidakkora kalyānam of Palghat have all or most
of the incidents of pudamuri, except the presenting of
cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the
other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is
also salkāram ceremony wanting in South Malabar, as
the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house
after marriage."

585 In connection with the following note by Mr. C. P.
Rāman Menon on sambandham among the Akattu
Charna or Akathithaparisha (inside clan), Mr. Fawcett
[582] states that "my informant says in the first place that the
man should not enter into sambandham with a woman
[178] until he is thirty. Now-a-days, when change is running
[181] wild, the man is often much less. In North Malabar,
[582] which is much more conservative than the south, it was,

585 A sambandham ceremony at Calicut is recorded by Mr. Fawcett, at which there were [574] cake and wine for the guests, and a ring for the bride.

[184] In connection with sambandham, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes from Travancore that "it is known in different localities as gunadosham (union through good or evil), vastradānam or putavakota (giving of cloth), and uzhamporukkal (waiting one's turn). It may be performed without any formal ceremony whatever, and is actually a private transaction confidentially gone through in some families. The bridegroom and his friends assemble at the house of the bride on the appointed night, and, before the assembled guests, the bridegroom presents the bride with a few unbleached cloths. Custom enjoins that four pieces of cloth should be presented, and the occasion is availed of to present cloths to the relatives and servants of the bride also. The girl asks permission of her mother and maternal [431] uncle, before she receives the cloths. After supper, and the distribution of pān-supāri, the party disperses. Another day is fixed for the consummation ceremony. [574] On that day the bridegroom, accompanied by a few friends, goes to the bride's house with betel leaves and nuts. After a feast, the friends retire."

It is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that one name for the sambandham rite is kitakkora, meaning 881 bed-chamber ceremony. In the same report, the following account of a puberty ceremony is given. "The tirandukuli ceremony is practically a public declaration that a girl has reached the age of maturity. When a girl attains puberty, she is seated in a separate room, where a lamp is lit, and a brass pot with a bunch of cocoanut flowers is kept. She has to keep with her a circular plate of brass called vālkannādi, literally a looking-glass with a handle. The event is proclaimed by korava

(shouts of joy by females). The females of the 881
neighbouring houses, and of the families of friends and
relatives, visit her. New cloths are presented to the girl
by her near relatives. On the third day the villagers,
friends and relatives are treated to a luncheon of rice and
milk pudding. Early in the morning on the fourth day,
the Mannans or Vèlans appear. The girl is anointed
with oil, and tender leaves of the cocoanut palm are tied
round the head and waist. In the company of maidens [533]
she is brought out of the room, and the Vèlans sing
certain songs. Thence the party move on to the tank,
where the girl wears a cloth washed by a Vēlan, and
takes a bath. After the bath the Vēlans again sing [533]
songs. In the afternoon, the girl is taken out by [574]
the females invited for the occasion to an ornamental [431]
pandal, and the Vèlans, standing at a distance, once more
sing. With the usual distribution of pān-supāri, sandal
and jasmine flowers, the ceremony closes. In the midst
of the song, the female guests of the village, the wives
of friends and relatives, and most of the members of
the family itself, present each a small cloth to the
Vèlans. They are also given a small amount of money,
rice, betel leaf, etc. The guests are then entertained at [574]
a feast. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate
house for the bath on the fourth day, whence she returns
to her house in procession, accompanied by tom-toms
and shouting. In the northern tāluks, the Vèlan's song [533]
is in the night, and the performance of the ceremony [184]
on the fourth day is compulsory. In the southern tāluks,
it is often put off to some convenient day. Before the
completion of this song ceremony, the girl is prohibited
from going out of the house or entering temples."

It is provided, by the Malabar Marriage Act, 1896, that, 575
"when a sambandham has been registered in the manner 217
656

843 performed, usually the vadakkini, there is arranged a
mat, the usual lamp (nilavilakku) with five wicks, and a
para measure of rice (niracchaveppu), also the materials
necessary for the performance of Ganapathi pūja (wor-
ship of the god Ganēsa), consisting of plantains, brown
sugar, leaves of the sacred basil or tulasi (*Ocimum
sanctum*), sandal paste, and the eight spices called
[593] ashtagantham. The woman's brother performs Ganapathi
pūja, and then gives some of the tamarind leaves to the
Enangatti, who expresses their juice, and mixes it with
[824] that of four other plants.* The mixture is boiled with
a little rice, and the brother takes a little of it in a jack
[602] (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) leaf folded like a spoon, and
lets it run down the blade of a knife into his sister's
mouth. He does this three times. Then the mixture
is administered in the same manner by some woman of
the husband's family, and then by an Ammāyi (wife of
[574] one of the members of the girl's tarwad). The branch
is then planted in the nadumittam, and feasting brings
the ceremony to a close. The above description was
obtained from an Urali Nāyar of Calicut taluk. In
other localities and castes, the details vary considerably.
[564] Sometimes the mixture is simply poured into the
woman's mouth, instead of being dripped off a knife.
Some castes use a small spoon of gold or silver instead
184 of the jack leaves. In South Malabar there is not as
843 a rule any procession to the tamarind tree. Among
564 Agathu Charna Nāyars of South Malabar, the ceremony
takes place in the nadumittam, whither the tamarind
branch is brought by a Tiyan. The girl carries a
valkannadi or bell-metal mirror, a charakkōl or arrow,
and a pisankatti (knife). An Enangatti pours some oil

---

[137] * The aimpuli or "five tamarinds" are *Tamarindus indica*, *Garcinia Cambogia*, *Spondias mangifera*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, and *Hibiscus hirtus*.

184

on her head, and lets it trickle down two or three hairs 843
to her navel, where it is caught in a plate. Then the 564
girl and her brother, holding hands, dig a hole with
the charakkōl and pisankatti, and plant the tamarind
branch in the nadumittam, and water it. Then the [782]
juice is administered. Until she is confined, the girl [824]
waters the tamarind branch, and offers rice, flowers,
and lighted wicks to it three times a day. When labour
begins, she uproots the branch."

"At delivery," Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes, 844
"women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In 564
some localities, this is performed by Vēlan caste women. 783
Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and every day the 846
mother wears cloths washed and presented by a woman [564]
of the Vannān [or Tiyan] caste. On the fifteenth day is
the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pol- [764]
lution, a man of the Attikurissi clan sprinkles on the [825]
woman a liquid mixture of oil and the five products of [824]
the cow (pānchagavya), with gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds.
Then the woman takes a plunge-bath, and sits on the ground near the tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water from the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. This done, she again plunges in the water, from which she emerges thoroughly purified. It may be noted that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo a rite of purification. It is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few
drops of cold water on it, and takes it in his hands. The [828]
superstitious believe that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles
the water. All the members of the taravād observe [613]
pollution for fifteen days following the delivery, during

764 persons who have died of cholera or small-pox. When
[766] preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse
[351] is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the
house, if there is one (there always is in the larger
houses); and, if there is not, is taken to the front yard,
where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed
and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandal paste
764 and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is
613 then done what is called the potavekkuka ceremony,
or placing new cotton cloths (kōti mundu) over the
corpse by the senior member of the deceased's taravād
followed by all the other members, and also the sons-in-law
and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are
used for tying up the corpse, when being taken to
[184] the place of burial or cremation. In some parts of
Malabar, the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh
bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is
carried, well covered in the cloths, by hand. In either
case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse
is removed, there is done another ceremony called pāra-
804 virakkuka, or filling up pāras. (A pāra is a measure
564 nearly as big as a gallon.) All adult male members
of the taravād take part in it under the direction
of a man of the Attikkurissi clan who occupies the
position of director of the ceremonies during the next
fifteen days, receiving as his perquisites all the rice
and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit. It
consists in filling up three pāra measures with paddy
(unhusked rice), and one edangāli ($\frac{1}{16}$ of a pāra) with raw
[782] rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very
near the corpse, together with a burning lamp of the
kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela vilaku. If
the taravād is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is
placed over the corpse before its removal for cremation.

765
613 that, in some parts of Malabar, the visitors bring with
574 them small presents in money or kind to help the
[783] Karanavan through the expenditure to which the funeral
rites necessarily put him. To hark back a little, it must
not be omitted that, on the third day after the death, all
those who are related by marriage to the taravād of the
deceased combine, and give a good feast to the inmates
of the house and to the neighbours who are invited, one
man or woman from each house. The person so invited
is expected to come. This feast is called patni karigi.
On the seventh day, a return feast will be given by the
taravād of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours.
Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no
ceremony is observed, but the members of the taravād
remain under death pollution. On the fourteenth day
764 comes the sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the cal-
613 cined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male
[415] members of the taravād go to the place of cremation,
and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they
find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been
sun-dried (not burnt by fire in the usual way), cover
up the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and,
all following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the
nearest river (it must be running water), which receives
the remains of the dead. The men then bathe, and return
[184] home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected
[778] on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better
by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it to
take them to some specially sacred place, Benares, Gaya,
Rameswaram, or even to some place of sanctity much
nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynaad, and there
764 dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or
769 ashes of any one having been taken to Gaya and there
613 deposited in the river, the survivors of the taravād have

no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. 764
This is called ashtagaya srādh. It puts an end to the 613
need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the [769]
collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead [775]
gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, [787]
the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living
members of the taravād, cause miscarriage to the women,
possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on. On 764
the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory ceremony. 613
Until this has been done, any one touched by any 783
member of the taravād should bathe before he enters
his house, or partakes of any food. A man of the [564]
Athikurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil, in
which some gingelly seeds have been put, over the
persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling, and
the bath which follows it, remove the death pollution.
The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his offices [465]
on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the
taravād. In the case of death of a senior member of a 766
taravād, well-to-do and recognised as of some importance, 613
there is the feast called pinda atiyantaram on the 765
sixteenth day after death, given to the neighbours and 302
friends. With the observance of this feast of pindams
there is involved the dīksha, or leaving the entire body
unshaved for forty-one days, or for a year. There is no
variable limit between forty-one days or a year. The [184]
forty-one-day period is the rule in North Malabar. I
have seen many who were under the dīksha for a year.
He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew of
the deceased. One member only of the taravād bears 766
the mark of mourning by his growth of hair. He who 765
is under the dīksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly 613
seeds to the spirits of the deceased every morning after [782]
his bath, and he is under restriction from women, from [784]
[834]

The spirits of those who
have committed suicide, or met death by any violent 766
means, are always particularly vicious and troublesome 775
to the taravād, their spirits possessing and rendering
miserable some unfortunate member of it. Unless they [782]
are pacified, they will ruin the taravād, so Brāhman priests are called in, and appease them by means of tilahōmam, a rite in which sacrificial fire is raised, and ghī, gingelly, and other things are offered through it."

"There are," Mr. Fawcett writes, "many interesting 764
features in the death ceremonies as performed by the 184 ●
Kiriattil class. Those who carry the corpse to the pyre 613
are dressed as women, their cloths being wet, and each [564]
carries a knife on his person. Two junior male members of the taravād thrust pieces of mango wood into the southern end of the burning pyre, and, when they are lighted, throw them over their shoulders to the southwards without looking round. Close to the northern end of the pyre, two small sticks are fixed in the ground, and tied together with a cloth, over which water is poured thrice. All members of the taravād prostrate to the ground before the pyre. They follow the enangu carrying the pot of water round the pyre, and go home without looking round. They pass to the northern side of the house under an arch made by two men standing east and west, holding at arms length, and touching at the points, the spade that was used to dig the pit under the pyre, and the axe with which the wood for the pyre was cut or felled. 'After this is done the kodali ceremony, using the spade, axe, and big knife. These are placed on the leaves where the corpse had lain. Then follows circumambulation and prostration by all, and the leaves are committed to the burning pyre."

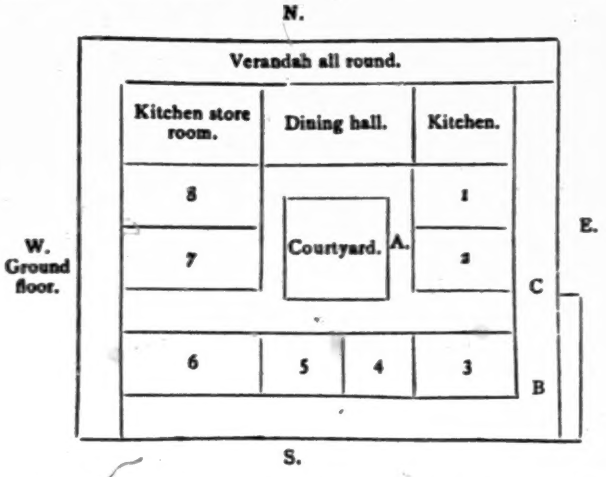
In connection with the death ceremonies, it is noted 763
in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the last 184

763 184 [778] moments of a dying person are really very trying. All members (male and female), junior to the dying person, pour into his or her mouth drops of Ganges or other holy water or conjee (rice) water in token of their last tribute of regard. Before the person breathes his last, he or she is removed to the bare floor, as it is considered sacrilegious to allow the last breath to escape while lying on the bed, and in a room with a ceiling, which last is supposed to obstruct the free passage of the breath. The names of gods, or sacred texts are loudly dinned into his or her ears, so that the person may quit this world with the recollections of God serving as a passport to heaven. The forehead, breast, and the joints especially are besmeared with holy ashes, so as to prevent the messengers of death from tightly tying those parts when they carry away the person. Soon
764 184 after the last breath, the dead body is removed to some open place in the house, covered from top to toe with a washed cloth, and deposited on the bare floor with the head towards the south, the region of the God of death. A lighted lamp is placed near the head, and other lights are placed all round the corpse. A mango tree is cut, or other firewood is collected, and a funeral pyre is constructed in the south-eastern corner of a compound or garden known as the corner of Agni, which is always reserved as a cemetery for the burning or burial of the dead. All male members, generally junior, bathe, and, without wiping their head or body, they remove the corpse to the yard in front of the house, and place it on a plantain leaf. It is nominally anointed with oil, and bathed in water. Ashes and sandal are again smeared on the forehead and joints. The old cloth is removed, and the body is covered with a new unwashed cloth or a piece of silk. A little gold or silver, or small coins are put into the

mouth. With the breaking of a cocoanut, and the offering 764
of some powdered rice, betel leaf, areca nut, etc., the 184
body is taken to the pyre. The members junior to the
deceased go round the pyre three, five, or seven times,
throw paddy and rice over the dead body, put scantlings
of sandal wood, prostrate at the feet of the corpse, and
then set fire to the pyre. When the body is almost
wholly consumed, one of the male members carries a pot
of water, and, after making three rounds, the pot is
broken and thrown into the pyre. The death of an [766]
elderly male member of a family is marked by udakakriya
and sanchayanam and the daily bali performed at the
bali kutti (altar) planted in front of the house, or in the
courtyard in the centre of the house, where there is one.
The Ashtikurissi Nāyar officiates as priest at all such
obsequies. On the morning of the fifteenth day, the 765
members of the family wear cloths washed by a Vêlan, 783
and assemble together for purification by the Nāyar 184
priest, both before and after bathing, who throws on them
paddy and rice, and sprinkles the holy mixture. The
Elayad or family purōhit then performs another punnayaham
or purification, and on the sixteenth day he takes
the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth [574]
day, and the morning of the sixteenth day, the purōhits
and villagers are sumptuously feasted, and presents of
cloths and money are made to the Elayads. In the [564]
Chittūr tāluk, the Tamil Brāhman sometimes performs [793]
priestly functions in place of the Elayad. Dīksha is [769]
performed for forty-one days, or for a whole year, for the
benefit of the departed soul. This last ceremony is
invariably performed on the death of the mother, maternal
uncle, and elder brother."

In connection with the habitations of the Nāyars, Mr. 342
Fawcett writes as follows. "A house may face east or [823]

342
[823] west, never north or south; as a rule, it faces the east. Every garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing
351 of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, in the case of the poorest houses, a small portico or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this;
[184] there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the
342 Nâyars. The following is a plan of a nālapura or four-
556 sided house, which may be taken as representative of the houses of the rich:—



Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms, which are generally used for storing grain. At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper storey occupied by the female members of the family. At B is another staircase leading to the rooms of the upper storey occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portions allotted to the men and women. No. 8 is for
[532] the family gods. The Karanavans and old women of
[613] the family are perpetuated in images of gold or silver,
[735] or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, who cannot

tamarind, and mango. The whole house is known as vitu. The houses are built on various models, such as 342 pattayappura, nālukettu, ēttukettu, and kuttikettu."

Concerning the dress of the Nāyars, Mr. N. 291 Subramani Aiyar writes that "the males dress themselves in a mundu (cloth), a loose lower garment, and a towel. A neriyatu, or light cloth of fine texture with coloured border, is sometimes worn round the mundu on festive occasions. Coats and caps are recent introductions, [177] but are eschewed by the orthodox as unnational. It is noted by Mr. Logan that 'the women clothe themselves in a single white cloth of fine texture, reaching from the waist to the knees, and occasionally, when abroad, they throw over the shoulder and bosom another similar cloth. But by custom the Nāyar women go uncovered from the waist. Upper garments indicate lower caste, or [564] sometimes, by a strange reversal of Western notions, immodesty.' Edward Ives, who came to Anjengo about 1740, observes that 'the groves on each bank of the river are chiefly planted with cocoanut trees, and have been inhabited by men and women in almost a pure state of nature, for they go with their breasts and bellies entirely naked. This custom prevails universally throughout [564] every caste from the poorest planter of rice to the [184] daughter or consort of the king upon the throne.'" [According to ancient custom, Nāyar women in Travancore used to remove their body-cloth in the presence of the Royal Family. But, since 1856, this custom has [576] been abolished, by a proclamation during the reign of [643] H.H. Vanchi Bala Rāma Varma Kulasakhara Perumal Bhagiodya Rāma Varma. In a critique on the Indian Census Report, 1901, Mr. J. D. Rees observes* that shouting, gesticulation and laughter. Those returning, 526 after securing a large number of arrows, turned somersaults, and expressed their joy in saltatory motions." In a note on this game with bows and arrows in Kurumbranad, Mr. E. F. Thomas writes that "the players form themselves into two sides, which shoot alternately at the mark. Beside the mark stand representatives of the two sides. When the mark is hit by a member of either side, on his representative shouting 'Run, man,' he runs up the lists. His object is to seize the mark before it is hit by any one belonging to the other side. If he can do this, his side takes all the arrows which have been shot, and are sticking in the stop-butt. If, on the other hand, the mark is hit by the other side before he reaches it, he may not seize the mark. A member of the other side runs up in his turn to seize the mark if possible before it is hit again by the first side. If he can do this, he takes out, not all the arrows, but only the two which are sticking in the mark. If, while number two is running, the mark is hit a third time, a member of the first side runs up, to seize the mark if possible. The rule is that one or three hits take all the arrows in the stop-butt, two or four only the arrows sticking in the mark. Great excitement is shown by all who take part in the game, which attracts a number of spectators. The game is played every fortnight by Nâyars, Tiyans, Mâppillas, and others. I am told that it is a very old one, and is dying [178] out. I saw it at Naduvanûr."

---

* Nineteenth Century, 1904.

The Ōnam games in the south-east of Malabar, in 796 the neighbourhood of Palghat, are said by Mr. Fawcett 526 to be of a rough character, "the tenants of certain jenmis 184 (landlords) turning out each under their own leader, and engaging in sham fights, in which there is much rough play. Here, too, is to be seen a kind of boxing, which

796
526 would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman
[184] pugiles using the cestus in combat. The position taken
up by the combatants is much the same as that of the
[175] pugiles. The Romans were familiar with Malabar from
about 30 B.C. to the decline of their power.* We may
safely assume that the 3,000 lbs. of pepper, which Alaric
demanded as part of the ransom of Rome when he
besieged the city in the fifth century, came from
Malabar." Swinging on the uzhinjal, and dancing to the
accompaniment of merry songs, are said to be characteristic
amusements of the womankind during Ōnam
festival, and, on the Patinaram Makam, or sixteenth day
after Thiruvonam. This amusement is indulged in by
both sexes. It is noted by Mr. Fawcett that "the cloths
given as Ōnam presents are yellow, or some part of them
[431] is yellow. There must be at least a yellow stripe or a
[174] small patch of yellow in a corner, which suggests a relic
[178] of sun-worship in a form more pronounced than that
which obtains at present. It is a harvest festival, about
the time when the first crop of paddy (rice) is harvested."

796 Concerning another important festival in Malabar,
the Thiruvathira, Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar writes as
follows.† "Thiruvathira is one of the three great
national occasions of Malabar. It generally comes off
in the Malayālam month of Dhanu (December or January)
on the day called the Thiruvathira day. It is
essentially a festival in which females are almost exclu-
[176] sively concerned, and lasts for but a single day. The
[773] popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration
of the death of Kāmadēvan, the Cupid of our national
mythology. As recorded in the old Purānas, Kāmadēvan

---

* See Thurston. Catalogue of Roman, etc., Coins, Madras Government Museum, 2nd ed., 1894.

† Malabar and its Folk, 1900.

796
564 garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below
[193] must be left to the imagination. It will have been
noticed that the Nambūtiris hold aloof from the festival;
they purify the temple before and after, but no more.
796 The importance attached to the various offices of those
793 who are attached to the temple by however slender
573 a thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble
between two of the Mukkuvans, an uncle and nephew,
as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella
from the temple, and bear it to the house of the goldsmith
to be repaired. During the festival, one of them made a
rapid journey to the Zamorin (about fifty miles distant),
paid some fees, and established himself as the senior who
had the right to carry the umbrella.

796 "An important local festival is that held near Palghat,
184 in November, in the little suburb Kalpāti inhabited
entirely by Pattar Brāhmans from the east. But it is not a true Malayāli festival, and it suffices to mention its existence, for it in no way represents the religion of the Nāyar. The dragging of cars, on which are placed the images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of Jagganath at Pūri in Orissa to Cape Comorin, is quite unknown in Malabar, excepting only at Kalpāti, which is close to the eastern frontier of Malabar.

982 "Near Chowghāt (Chavagāt), about 30 miles to the
[131] southward of Calicut, on the backwater, at a place called
[346] Guruvayūr, is a very important temple, the property of
[635] the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited
the festival on one occasion, and purchase was made of
[126] a few offerings such as are made to the temple in satis-
[532] faction of vows—a very rude representation of an infant
in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man, the giver. Symbolization of the offering of self is made by

796
788 and I have often seen many of them garbed and mouth-
[785] locked, going off on a pilgrimage to that place. Pilgrims generally go in crowds under charge of a priestly guide, one who, having made a certain number of journeys to the shrine, wears a peculiar sash and other gear. They call themselves pūjāris, and are quite *au fait* with all the ceremonial prior to the journey, as well as with the exigencies of the road. As I stood there, one of these pūjāris stood up amidst the recumbent crowd. He raised his hands towards the temple a little to the west, and then spread out his hands as if invoking a blessing on the people around him. Full of religious fervour, he was (apparently at any rate) unconscious of all but the spiritual need of his flock.

796 "Brief mention must be made of the festival held
788 at Kodungallūr near Cranganore in the northernmost
184 corner of the Cochin State, as it possesses some strange features peculiar to Malabar, and is much frequented by the Nāyars. I have been disappointed in obtaining particulars of the festival, so make the following excerpt from Logan's Manual of Malabar. 'It takes the people in great crowds from their homes. The whole country near the lines of march rings with the shouts "Nada-a Nada-a" of the pilgrims to the favourite shrine. Of what takes place when the pilgrims reach this spot perhaps the less said the better. In their passage up to the shrine, the cry of "Nada-a Nada-a" (march, march away) is varied by terms of unmeasured abuse levelled
[195] at the goddess (a Bhagavati) of the shrine. This abusive language is supposed to be acceptable to her. On arrival at the shrine, they desecrate it in every conceivable way, believing that this too is acceptable; they throw stones and filth, howling volleys of

opprobrium at her house. The chief of the fisherman 796
caste, styled Kūli Muttatta Arayan, has the privilege of 788
being the first to begin the work of polluting the Bhoot 184
or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary [564]
to enter. Cocks are slaughtered and sacrificed. The [782]
worshipper gets flowers only, and no holy water after
paying his vows. Instead of water, he proceeds outside
and drinks arrack or toddy, which an attendant Nāyar
serves out. All castes are free to go, including Tiyars [564]
and low caste people. The temple was originally only
a Bhoot or holy tree with a platform. The image in
the temple is said to have been introduced only of
recent years.' It is a pity Mr. Logan is so reticent.
My information is that the headman of the Mukkuvans
opens the festival by solemnly making a fæcal deposit
on the image. Here again there is the same strange
union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and
irreverent, with every mode of expressing the deepest
religious feeling."

Of the cock festival at Cranganore, the following 796
account is given by Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar* in his 778
interesting little book on Malabar and its folk. "In 776
the midst of its native charms is situated a temple
dedicated to Kali, the goddess who presides over the
infectious diseases, cholera and small-pox. She is a [753]
virgin goddess, whom no quantity of blood will satisfy.
The temple is an old-fashioned one, presenting no
striking architectural peculiarities. The priestly classes [564]
attached to it are not, as usual, Brāhmins, but a peculiar [795]
sect called Adigals, of whom there are but three families [793]
in the whole of Malabar. The Brāhmins are purposely
excluded from participation in the poojah ceremonies,

---

* Malabar and its Folk, Madras, 1900.

121 complex, contradictory, and difficult material collected by many au-
611 thors, and, second, to test the Ceylon model of the association of hy-
564 pergamy with unilineal descent. It will be recalled that Gough's Kumbapettai village seemed to include the variations in kinship found dispersed over a large area in Ceylon. On the Malabar coast, the situation is, if possible, made even more complicated: in this famous region we find every possible variation of our model, from matrilineal hypergamous systems to endogamous and patrilineal hypergamous systems, all existing pell-mell in the same area. In general, it seems clear that these various features are used as structural indices to dis-
[554] tinguish communities from one another. The over-all pattern, by contrast, seems uncluttered: in lower levels of social rank we find, on the whole, endogamous castes which so far as the material goes exhibit the fundamental characteristics of the general structure. In the higher levels of Hindu and Muslim society we find an intense preoccupation with status and social rank, and unilineal descent systems are built out of the general structure. Then, in the limiting cases, each matrilineage behaves as if it were a single unique caste having only hypergamous connections with the outside world.

In this section, I shall first attempt to establish the existence of the general structure in castes in both North and South Malabar, and I shall then go on to examine the questions of descent and hypergamy.
[197] Before we come to specific cases, I should observe that the region ex-
[171] hibits an impressive general cultural uniformity: the language, Malayalam, is very closely related to Tamil; the details of the customs find immediate echoes not only in the material from the rest of South In-
[184] dia but among Buddhists in Ceylon as well. Quite apart from structural matters, there is an intuitive appreciation of the fact that we are in a civilization with a distinctive style of its own in which the different customs of discrete groups appear as permutations and combinations of the same set of general ideas.

101 The term Nayar covers a motley collection of categories of people.
564 Primarily, they are aristocratic Nayar descended from the important royal houses of Cochin and Travancore. There are also people of servant castes who have allegedly taken on the Nayar title in the last century and are only Nayar by courtesy. Some of these categories may be fully endogamous and others, at the higher levels, hypergamous. Though there are again uniformities, it is important to specify which
613 group of Nayar are being considered. The word *taravad,* used by various castes in Malabar, denotes a group of matrilineally related persons with the same name who observe rules of exogamy. The *taravad* may be split into smaller property-holding groups, each with a head *Karanavan.*[7]

---

[7] "One who 'acts' ": comp. *Karanava,* "to do" in Sinhalese.

NORTH NAYAR

Anthropological investigations in Malabar have usually gone straight 613
to the most spectacular cases: the matrilineal Nayar *taravad* of 114
Cochin and Travancore. This tendency, though understandable, is hardly justified, since the matrilineal *taravad* achieves its greatest elaboration among the aristocratic ranks of the ruling families and can hardly be accepted as a typical feature of the landscape.

It should be clear that today there is great variation in practice 613
among the Nayar groups in Malabar, not only from the aristocrats to 114
the low-caste menials (who like to call themselves Nayar) but also 184 •
within the same Nayar "subcastes." In an illuminating passage, Karve [554]
(1953), for example, notes how many individual Nayar feel that they should lay the foundations for a new *taravad* in their sister's name as soon as they can afford to do so, for a named matrilineal *taravad* is clearly an important aspect of status for Nayar men. Gough (1952*a*) has used a historical model to deal with the variations. She argues, in effect, that the past was orderly and the present is confused. Theory and practice were harmonious in the past but are now breaking down. The tempo of new developments, political, economic, social, can hardly be denied, but we can suggest that the past idealized by Gough may well have been as diverse (in terms of the structure of matrilineal *taravad*) as the present. It is likely that there always were nascent, medium-sized, and fully developed *taravad* based on the same principles.

We shall examine the aristocratic Nayar lineages in a moment. In 613
North Malabar, the *taravad* is significantly different from the region [184]
around the Cochin kingdoms. In the North, there was apparently less political centralization and a relatively limited development of subcategories of Nayar castes with special duties. Most of the Nayar were called Nambiar and were small landowners who lived in villages.
They recognized dispersed matrilineal clans, and the property group [614]
in the locality was regarded as a segment of such a clan.

At marriage the girl moved to the household of her husband, but 591
she returned temporarily to her natal household to bear her children [844]
(a custom still followed among the Sinhalese). The children when [171]
grown went to their MB; the males stayed with the MB as members of [851]
matri-lines and the females were married off from that house. [613]

Here, clearly, are the complex claims on the sister and her children. 601
I need hardly point out that all aspects of the general structure are [602]
to be seen in their organization. First, the usual Dravidian terminology was used for reference (Schneider and Gough, 1961, p. 404). A clear distinction was made between the categories for reference and the

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
Kerala AW11

Let us now return to the facts:

The Nayar family in Cochin and South Malabar (also referred to 613
as Central Kerala) is also organized on the principles of the matrilineal
taravad. Among ordinary people, matrilineal groups beyond the household
are barely recognized for most intents and purposes, but among
the wealthy and aristocratic classes, the *taravad* finds an impressive
elaboration. Gough presents the ideal model as a matrilineal clan [114]
with localized matri-lines all of which are exogamous. The women
have equal or hypergamous connections with men of other *taravad*
or castes, whereas the men visit women of lower *taravad*. The residential 591
pattern is that brothers and sisters live in the same household
and men visit their "wives" in their own households. This contrasts [184] •
with the North Nayar picture in which women join their [191]
husbands in their houses, and with the Mapilla picture (their Muslim
neighbors) in which the men join their wives in the houses as in
Ceylon. Of course, in a climate and region where houses are easily [602]
built and where the kin of both the husband and the wife are quite
likely to be in the near vicinity of the married couple, if not in the
same community, these residential arrangements may be looked upon
primarily as symbolic statements of "difference" rather than fundamental
differences in kinship systems and sentiments.

We may now raise further questions:

First: to what extent does our previous discussion of the general 121
structure help us to understand the Nayar situation? A careful examination 114
of the data makes it clear that the Nayar family in Cochin
and South Malabar presents a further elaboration upon the Dravidian
theme. It should be emphasized that this is hardly the impression one
would have received from the earlier work of Gough. It is curious to [613]
observe, as Dumont (1961*a*) does, to what extent Gough's picture of [602]
the Nayar situation has progressively altered from one in which there
were matrilineages with hardly any recognition of the role of the [582]
pater, to one in which the father and his kin are recognized and
"preferential" cross-cousin marriage is at least observed. The change
in point of view is a sobering thought as far as "objective" anthropology
is concerned: for a perusal of the writings of this highly observant
and careful author shows that she is using an African model
(including concepts of clanship and ties of ritual collaboration) in
her earlier work. It is only very gradually that she comes around to
consider her material in its context in South India.

As far as we can observe, the kin terminology of the high-caste 121
Nayar of Cochin and South Malabar is structurally identical to that 601
of North Malabar and hence to the Dravidian terminology of cross-cousin 114
marriage, with one significant difference: there appears to be 184
no term for actual cross-cousins. It is true that Gough does not provide 605

121 a consistent terminology of reference—which is important in South
601 India and Ceylon—but since the language and indeed all the rest of
114 the terms themselves are identical to those of North Malabar, the lack
[184] of terms precisely for cross-cousins may be significant. The matter is
[605] all the more curious since such terms as, for example, *maru mahan* (son "by marriage"!)[9] which Ego uses for ZS in the same *taravad* and which reciprocates with MB (*mama*) also carry the implication "son-in-law" and "father-in-law."

121 However we may wish to interpret this intriguing lacuna (could it
582 be an aspect of Nambudiri-Nayar hypergamy?), it appears that there
605 is, first, a prohibition on sexual and marital connections with parallel
114 cousins and also a "preference" for cross-cousin marriage. Both rules
[834] are clearly present, though they do not carry the categorical implication which is attached to them elsewhere.

Gough's account of this matter is not very clear. She notes first (1961, p. 365): "Bilateral cross-cousin marriage was freely permitted, with some preference for marriage to the mother's brother's daughter or step-daughter." A little further on she notes the "preference" in passing: "It may seem strange that preferred cross-cousin marriage should have existed side by side with group marriage, for cross-cousin marriage . . . suggests an interest in prolonging the ties brought about both by paternity and by matrilineal kinship."

114 It seems to me that even in her most recent publication Gough is
121 trying to minimize the role of paternity among the Nayar when the
582 facts are palpably otherwise. She notes, "Many men, presumably,
851 entered marriage relations with cross-cousins only incidentally—often, presumably, without being fully aware of the blood relationship" (1961, p. 365)—a presumption which seems extremely unlikely even in the Malabar conditions she describes.

121 We should perhaps stress that Gough's data suggest much closer
114 similarities to a South Indian pattern than her theoretical framework
605 permits. Consider the customary relations between cross-cousins: "Cross-cousins of the same sex and caste had a familiar, mildly joking relationship if they maintained contact . . . cross-cousins of the opposite sex might talk to each other with rather more freedom than to
[588] unrelated persons. In his role of enangan a boy sometimes tied the
[613] tali for his maternal uncle's daughter . . ." (1961, pp. 364–365).

We should note this last sentence particularly: the role of *enangan*
121 as a cross-cousin and hence a perpetual affine on the Dravidian pattern
114 is a new development in the work of Gough. It confirms our impres-
613 sion that even in Cochin where the *taravad* reaches its greatest devel-
184 opment, a version of the general structure is still visible. The question
[605] of "perpetual affinity" has been discussed extensively by Dumont

---

[9] See the discussions of *maru* by Karve (1953, p. 213) and by Dumont (1957a).

(1961*b*, pp. 20 ff.), and it is important in tying the Nayar material into 121
the South Indian picture. 613

With all these similarities, in what sense, then, is this system a [114]
logical elaboration of the general structure? What makes the structure [184]
of kinship among the aristocratic Nayar a special case is that in it we find again the combination of hypergamy and unilineal descent.

As we noted above, extensive hypergamy in the context of matrilineage results in a consistent differentiation of status between lineages, and it allows special ritual status to be claimed by each autonomous matrilineage. It will be observed that matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is the only consistent pattern that can be associated with the hypergamous and matrilineal kin structure described above.

121
582
613

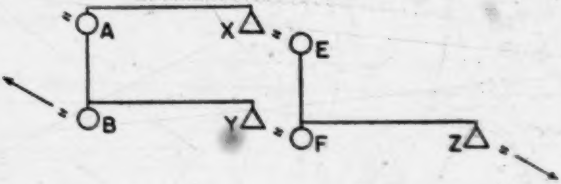


Figure 38. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

In figure 38, sister A establishes a *sambandam* connection with a person of superior status. Her children, B and Y (members of the matrilineage), are themselves superior in status to the children of their MB (X), who has a *sambandam* with a woman of equal or lower status to himself (E). Hence if cross-cousin marriage is to take place, the MBD (F) may be hypergamously connected with Y (i.e., matrilateral cross-cousin marriage), but B, like her mother A, will be given further up the hierarchy and cannot be permitted to have *sambandam* with Z (i.e., patrilateral cross-cousin marriage).

We should note in passing that this association of MBD marriage 121
and hypergamy in these castes is a remarkable corroboration of Leach's 114
hypothesis regarding the structural implications of matrilateral cross- 582
cousin marriage systems. Leach (1951) writes of patrilineal systems 611
associated with hypogamy (women go down) among the Kachin. It is [171]
certainly salutary to find that this mirror-image of Leach's model, that is, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage in a matrilineal context, is associated with hypergamy, asymmetry, and distinctions of status.

To return to Malabar, the combination of matrilineal descent to- 121
gether with the rules of hypergamy is consistent with great differenti- 564
ation of status between the descent groups—so much so that in the 611
proliferation of descent groups it appears to be difficult, indeed impossible, to say where one caste ends and the other begins. Some de-

Malabar, in which patrilineal and matrilineal castes who are similar 121
in their kinship customs are described, and again we find that other 564
sections of the same casts are patrilineal or matrilineal in different 611
localities. In parts of Ceylon I would hear villagers suggest that sons [171]
took their "names" from their father and daughters from their mother, a reflection not so much of descent (for these ideas were not applied in practice) but of the difference between the sexes.

Even the Muslims are not very different. On the Malabar coast the 779
diversity of origins in the Muslim community can be easily traced in 184
the complex body of customs, appellations, different signs, and prac- 602
tice whereby subgroups appear to distinguish one another. Gough 613
(1961) has discussed some features of the matrilineal Muslims (Ma- 121
pilla); D'Souza (1959) in a carefully documented article observes that, leaving aside a special group who call themselves *Arabi* and attempt to follow traditional Islam, Muslims in general conform to the patterns of kinship usual in Malabar and are divided into patrilineal and matrilineal *taravads* (p. 492). Moreover, in the case of patrilineal *taravads*, several of them again come together to form an *endogamous* group; hence in any locality there are several endogamous Moplah groups (p. 493). He goes on to make the following observation (p. 498):

> In the coastal North Malabar, as one proceeds southwards to places like Quilandy and Badagara, the mother right social organization undergoes a change. The change becomes quite distinct in the coastal region of South
> Malabar. The change in mother right traits . . . may be primarily attributed [428]
> to the fact that whereas in North Malabar the ancestral property is inherited exclusively in the female line, in the south it is inherited . . . in the male line. But the social organization is essentially mother right and the modifications are such as suit the change in the principle of inheritance.

It is not merely this shifting picture of descent and inheritance 121
which strikes one as being entirely in line with the material collected 564
by Iyer (1909, 1912, 1937) in all kinds of small caste groups, for 114
D'Souza (1959, p. 502) firmly establishes that the Muslim Mapilla also follow the Nambudiri–Nayar model of hypergamy with considerable dedication: "For instance, the Thangal males can marry women from any other groups of Moplahs [Mapilla] but Thangal women cannot marry any man other than a Thangal. An Arabi male can marry any [Mapilla] woman other than a Thangal, but the Arabi woman can marry, besides an Arabi male, only a Thangal male, and so on."

There is little doubt that the marriage customs recorded by D'Souza 121
bear a close similarity to those recorded for the Moors of Ceylon [58-
earlier in this volume. D'Souza's evidence on names is not directed to 171]
the question of hypergamy and prestige, but it does appear that names [551]